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The Merits of Merit Pay

David K. Cohen & Richard J. Murnane

Progressive Liberalism and American "Community" *William A. Schambra*

EDUCATING FOR THE PROFESSIONS

Between Profession and Vocation: The Case of Public Health
Stephen White

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on

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The merits of merit pay

DAVID K. COHEN & RICHARD J. MURNANE

MERIT PAY for teachers has been in the news, but not for the first time. When Warren Harding was president, many school boards were enthusiastic about rewarding better teachers with more money. By some estimates, between 40 and 50 percent of the country's urban school districts adopted some such scheme in the 1920s. This enthusiasm cooled in the 1930s and 1940s, but revived during the school worries of Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidency. It cooled again and then revived when President Reagan endorsed the notion a few years ago. The idea seems to provoke more controversy now than it did in the 1920s, but many state and local politicians have jumped on the bandwagon.

It is not surprising to find a business-oriented president pushing merit pay. Advocates of the idea always have argued that it is merely a way to get public schools to follow sensible business practice: Use money to reward the employees who do the best work, thereby inspiring other workers to do a better job or suffer the economic consequences.

It would be enlightening to trace these enthusiasms in detail, but we are more interested in how merit pay works. What happened when schools tried the idea? Can we learn anything about improving education from their experience?

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Such an inquiry might look to some like shooting fish in a barrel. After all, collective bargaining is now a fact of life in most of America's school districts, and teachers' unions have been notoriously opposed to pay-for-performance schemes. Even if the idea worked well once, how could it survive today? There is also cautionary evidence from business firms. Though proponents of merit pay hold up business as their example, many firms do not gauge workers' salaries by performance, in part because performance in many jobs is difficult to measure reliably. It is one thing to reward newsboys if they sell more papers, or linotypists if they set more type, but it is quite another to pay more to the people who write the best news stories. As in teaching, it might be easy to distinguish outstanding from terrible work, but could one reliably distinguish outstanding from merely good work? Figuring out responsible and defensible performance ratings for workers between the extremes might be difficult at best, and implementing such a scheme could cost an organization much more—in conflict, morale problems, and the like—than the benefits it would produce.

These are worthy concerns, but they are no reason to ignore merit pay in education. After all, this idea has been powerfully though intermittently appealing to school boards, administrators, and school reformers for more than half a century, and thousands of districts have tried merit pay. Any idea of such allure is worth looking into, if only because so many people who matter in American education have taken it seriously. In addition, the idea makes some intuitive sense. Even if it is difficult to distinguish between good teaching and better teaching, could it be that hard to see the difference between outstanding and bad teaching? Would not the top teachers be pleased to be paid more than the bad ones? Might it not be good for both sorts of teachers? The good teachers would presumably appreciate the extra money and recognition, and the bad ones might get the message: Improve, or look forward to more of the same.

Lessons from the past

We begin with the historical record, thin as it is. Many school districts adopted some version of merit pay between 1920 and 1940, but only a few education researchers paid attention to how merit pay worked in the thousands of experiments with salary incentives that were then underway. Most researchers studied achievement and ability testing, curriculum, and teachers' classroom performance, conventional subjects that appealed to their professional curiosity more than did efforts to use "business methods" in schools. (The study of incen-

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tives was disdained by education researchers for decades—the entry rarely even appeared in journal indexes.)

Still, we can learn a bit from practitioners' reports and from the few studies that were done between World Wars I and II. In general, it appears that most merit pay schemes had brief careers, and that some were quite controversial. Why?

The chief complaint was that schools found it difficult to devise defensible criteria of meritorious teaching. The earliest advocates of merit pay conceded that there was little consensus on how quality in teaching might be defined, little evidence for any of the possible definitions, and uncertain ways of measuring any given conception of quality. But researchers dove into these issues with a vengeance in the 1920s and 1930s, and produced a small mountain of studies designed to identify the components of quality in teaching. Their work was a great success in one sense: Many different approaches were devised and tried, including everything from supervisors' subjective ratings to detailed research on teachers' classroom behavior. But in another sense these efforts were a dismal failure. Because they measured so many different things, the instruments only reflected the diversity of opinion about what good teaching was, and how it could be measured. The lack of measures of teaching quality was supplanted by a chorus of conflicting voices about what the right measure was.

While this situation was embarrassing to aspiring education scientists, it hardly deterred many school administrators. Most simply devised their own ways to decide which teachers were best. Some districts relied on principals' ratings, but while this procedure had the virtue of simplicity, many teachers found it objectionable. They worried that "personality conflicts" would be the basis for denying merit increases, and they complained of favoritism. Other districts used paper-and-pencil rating schemes carried out by central office staff, but there were complaints that these were unreliable and difficult to administer. The historical record is too scanty to show just how much discontent and conflict these problems caused, but the issues were sufficiently important to be mentioned by administrators and researchers who reported on the results of merit pay schemes.

The most troubling feature of all the rating schemes, though, was that none of them could show a stable connection between teachers' merits and students' performance. Teachers who had high quality ratings did not consistently produce students with high achievement. This was problematic, since the prime rationale for merit pay was that it would stimulate productivity. If the better teachers did not produce better students, why pay them more?

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No one knows how influential this problem was in the demise of merit pay in the 1930s and 1940s. While the research seems to have been fairly well known, we hesitate to give it great weight. Most innovations in education have short careers; they quickly gain and lose favor for reasons that seem to have little to do with scientific evidence of any sort. The demise of merit pay in the 1930s and 1940s was typical in this respect. In addition, the Great Depression and World War II were good reasons for educators to lose interest in merit pay. And it seems that many school districts found merit pay a bothersome impediment to the creation of simple, unified salary schedules and other such efforts to tidy up school administration.

Another reason to be skeptical about the influence of research is that soon after World War II merit pay began to boom again. In a rush of amnesiac enthusiasm, at least one in every ten public school systems had adopted some version of merit pay by 1960. But again, interest subsided: Most of those plans had been abandoned by the early 1970s. By way of explanation, one study reported that the chief local reasons for abandoning merit pay included teachers' discontent with merit ratings and the difficulties of devising a scientifically defensible measure of teacherly merit.

Plans that persisted

Like some other researchers, we became interested in merit pay in the early 1980s, partly as a result of renewed political attention to the idea. Our first forays into this curious history led us to two guesses. One was that finding any district that had an operating merit pay scheme would be practically impossible. We were wrong. It turned out that there were quite a few districts with working merit pay plans. Some plans were in fact several decades old. This was a little puzzling, in light of the many previous problems and disappointments, but it was a welcome puzzle.

Our second guess was that any successful merit pay plan would have to solve three problems that had plagued districts in earlier times. One was to devise a defensible way to decide which teachers are meritorious. A second was to devise ways to minimize conflict among teachers, given the diversity of opinion about what constitutes good teaching and the potential for suspicion and division when some teachers are singled out for their excellence. A third was to devise a means to cope with the absence of any steady connection between measures of teachers' quality and measures of their students' achievement.

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Our second guess seems to have been better than our first. We began by selecting six districts that had been using merit pay schemes for at least six years (these were chosen from all such districts reported to be in operation—a number slightly over 100). We asked the superintendents in these districts if they would participate in our study, and when they agreed, we visited each district. Our intentions were ambitious but straightforward: We wanted to know how merit pay worked, and why, and to what effect. To this end we spoke with scores of teachers (meritorious and not), many principals, and several central office administrators. We studied local documents about each scheme and pestered local officials with follow-up questions. Our investigations showed that each of the six districts had found ways to cope with the three problems mentioned earlier, and it looked as though these strategies helped merit pay to endure.

The four most important strategies can be quickly summarized.

- Define the scheme as extra pay for extra work, rather than higher salaries for higher performance of the common classroom tasks of teaching.
- Solve the problems of defensible criteria in political rather than scientific terms; make the invention of criteria a collaborative project with teacher representatives, or let each teacher define the criteria for himself, or both.
- Manipulate the merit awards so as to minimize provocation; either keep the amounts negligible, keep the difference between awards small, or pass them out to nearly everyone.
- Keep a low profile on merit pay; make participation voluntary, and do not fuss unduly about who does and does not receive the awards.

Each of the six districts employed some combination of these strategies, though no two used the same combination, and of course none used all of them. In each of the districts merit pay seemed a workable, acceptable part of district operations. In none of the districts did it seem to us, or to our informants, that merit pay was particularly controversial. But one reason for the acceptance and lack of controversy was that the strategies implied redefinitions of the traditional ideas about merit pay—often very substantial redefinitions. In historical terms, for instance, the second strategy appears to be a relatively recent invention. Prior to the last few decades, administrators held on to the definition of criteria very tightly; they rarely consulted with teachers, and many tried to solve the problem in scientific terms. Most reports on merit pay between the two world wars also suggest that participation was not voluntary, that most schemes encompassed all

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teachers. On the one hand, then, it can be said that in these districts something called "merit pay" has become a regular fact of school life, accepted and perhaps even constructive. But on the other hand, can such redefined plans fairly be called merit pay? This is a familiar conundrum in the study of organizational innovations, but one that was illustrated with particular elegance in several of the districts that we studied. A few examples will sharpen the point.

Modest proposals: the case of Virginia Beach

The simplest plan we found was that of the schools in Virginia Beach, Virginia, a self-described suburban district that enrolls about 54,000 students. Educators in Virginia Beach regard their district as exceptional in the state. In addition to good salaries (which average around $25,000) the district has a reputation for having good students, good teachers, and serious schoolwork. Merit pay is open to all teachers who have at least ten years of experience, who have received "entirely satisfactory" ratings on the system's regular teacher evaluation program for the two years preceding their application for merit pay, and who demonstrate "professional involvement." Plenty of teachers meet the first two criteria—1,366 out of 2,931 teachers in 1982-83, according to the district's figures. But only 540 teachers were earning merit pay in that year, because 826 either did not apply, or were turned down because they did not meet the criteria for satisfactory professional involvement.

This low rate of participation seems a little puzzling, given the district's rather relaxed definition of professional involvement. According to the policy guidelines for merit pay (the technical term used there is "Career Service"), Virginia Beach teachers need only complete six activities out of a list of 18 that includes: successfully completing three hours of graduate study in teaching; successfully completing a school-sponsored in-service education course; serving as a member of a district-wide committee; serving as a member of a curriculum development workshop; accepting a student teacher; and so on. The nineteenth item on the list allows consideration of other professional activities not enumerated, if they were valuable to the school system. Completing six activities on such a list hardly seems arduous. In fact, the list looks very much like a compilation of a typical teacher's common activities, including sponsoring student clubs and attending conferences related to teaching. This is not surprising, since the list was drawn up in consultation with teacher representatives. Why, then, do only about 40 percent of the eligible teachers participate?

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Part of the answer seems to be the size of the award. In return for completing six of the specified activities in the two years preceding their application for merit pay, teachers receive an annual sum of $600. The administrator in charge of the program observed that an award of that size "really doesn't make a big difference." Teachers keep the increment for three years, and then have to reapply every three years until they leave, retire, or decide that the money is not worth it. Several teachers and administrators told us that the stipend was so small that many teachers simply did not bother. Another administrator agreed, adding that "if we made the carrot worthwhile . . . [more] teachers would apply."

The stipend is not as small as it seems, though. For teachers who get merit pay in Virginia Beach move onto the Career Salary Schedule, and thereby gain entry to additional benefits, unavailable to others. A Career Service teacher who earns a Certificate of Advanced Study—a professional certificate that usually follows an M.A. degree, and requires about the equivalent amount of coursework—is awarded an additional increment of $600. That boosts the annual merit increase to $1,200, on average a 5 percent raise. A Career Service teacher who earns a doctorate is awarded an additional $1,200, for a total annual merit increase of $1,800—roughly an 8 percent raise. The merit award seems rather substantial, then, for teachers who pursue their education beyond the master's level.

Not many teachers, however, pursue their education that far, and the merit awards for such work probably would not even cover the cost of tuition. So even for teachers who want more education, the award may seem too modest to be worth the effort. Still another explanation for low participation is that more apply than are rewarded. Each year several applicants are turned down. The decisions are made by a central office personnel administrator—a somewhat unusual procedure among our districts—based on the teachers' applications, their evaluations, and on rather perfunctory comments by their principals. But if applicants were not sure to receive awards, only a few were rejected each year.

A final reason for the relatively low participation rate in such a seemingly easy system may be that the merit awards have little to do with classroom work. Although most of the professional involvement items were related to instruction in one way or another, none was directly related. A good argument could be made, in fact, that most were only remotely related to classroom work. As one secondary school teacher commented, "the things that they are looking at in this application . . . aren't classroom related." To the extent that Virginia Beach

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teachers disliked anything about the merit pay plan, they disliked this feature. Several derided the scheme as utterly unrelated to excellence in teaching, and others argued that it was inappropriate to call the Career Service awards merit pay. As one former teacher, now a principal, commented: "Pretty mediocre people can be career service teachers; you can meet the requirements and not be outstanding in the classroom." To most teachers, the scheme seemed to be simply a reward for extra work. As one high school teacher who was on merit pay said, when we asked him if the award made him to do a better job: "It depends on what you mean by a better job. Academically? No. But co-curricular activities, extra-curricular activities? Yes. It keeps me doing them, it's the only thing that keeps me doing them."

Few teachers with whom we spoke disagreed with this assessment, though several central office administrators felt the program did reward excellence in teaching. In the teachers' view, and in ours, merit pay in Virginia Beach means extra pay for extra work. It is a rudimentary version of what might be called differentiated staffing. But while teachers were cognizant of this rather special definition—or redefinition—of merit pay, few seemed to resent it. Only a handful of teachers said that they thought the scheme was a poor one. Most said that they thought the plan was positive. By way of explanation, several teachers pointed out that participation in the Career Service Schedule was voluntary, and that there seemed to be little competition over the awards. Several pointed out that teachers were little aware of who won. The program had a very low profile, and release of the winners' names was indeed forbidden by district policy. We also were told that the scheme, which dates to 1974, was created with teachers' participation and has been modified somewhat during the intervening decade in response to their comments. All of these conditions seem to have reduced the chances of controversy, and thus to have increased teachers' acceptance of the scheme.

In fact, the most striking feature of teachers' comments on merit pay was their positive assessment of the district and its relations with teachers. When we asked why they liked working in a district with merit pay, they all gave roughly the same answer—Virginia Beach was a classy system. One teacher pointed out that administrators "back teachers emotionally . . . they let you know that you are doing a good job." Merit pay was just one example of community support for good education: "There is a great push to succeed here. The kids demand a good education." Another teacher expanded on the point: "There is a tradition of good education . . . . This is one place where teachers are dismissed if they are not good . . . in this district you have to support quality instruction."

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For these teachers and many others, merit pay was acceptable and even positive because they saw it as one manifestation of the district's support for good teaching. The Career Service was admittedly a modest manifestation, less important than several others, but it was consistent with the district's general concern with quality. That made Virginia Beach seem uniquely desirable among the other local districts that teachers knew. So while it seems fair to say that merit pay works in Virginia Beach, it also seems that merit pay works there because it modestly complements other good features of the school system. Merit pay made sense in Virginia Beach precisely because it blended easily into the woodwork. It was a weak treatment, successful partly because of that fact. The plan's modesty contrasts sharply with most of our other districts.

Solving the problem of legitimacy: Evanston

Perhaps the most complicated and politically prominent scheme was employed in Evanston, Illinois, an affluent suburb of Chicago. This district has had several versions of merit pay since the mid-1950s, and the changes bear directly on our story.

Initially, we were told, merit pay "was pretty much a question of what the principal thinks . . . and if he liked what you did you got merit pay. There was no formality." That system lasted about a decade, and then was radically overhauled. The result, installed in the mid-1960s, tied a newly devised set of criteria for good teaching to a rather elaborate arrangement for teacher salaries and promotion. There were five salary tracks, ranging from an initial track for novices to a fifth (and top) track for the most accomplished professionals. Each track had a dozen or more salary steps keyed to years of service, and teachers in each track automatically moved up a step every year. Doing so earned them annual increases that ranged between about $200 and $800, averaging about $500. But teachers could not move from a lower to a higher track simply on the basis of seniority, and salaries were higher in the higher tracks. Moving from one track to the next highest track (at the same step for years of service), would produce salary increases that ranged roughly between $1,000 and $3,000. And to get "track movement," as it is called in Evanston, teachers had to achieve a designation of "meritorious" under the new criteria.

Deciding what is meritorious is of course a long-standing problem with merit pay, but Evanston's solution seemed ingenious. Administrators, teachers, and an outside consultant compiled a list of five dimensions of meritorious teaching. Teaching skills were at the top of the list, followed by "classroom and school environment," "communication," "interpersonal relationships," and "professional contribu-

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tions." A list of "competencies" was then developed within each of the five areas. Teaching skills, for instance, began with "exhibits and imparts knowledge of subject matter," moved on to "encourages each member of the class to participate," and then to "uses the curriculum guideline in a creative and critical way." These and others seem sensible points, and several would not even be mentioned in other districts' evaluation schemes—if they even had such a thing. Evanston is a very well-regarded district, with a long-standing reputation for quality teaching. It shows through the professional jargon.

The next category (classroom and school environment) seemed a little less specific, but it drew attention to classroom discipline, constructive use of time, and related issues. "Communication and interpersonal relations" focused on such vague but noteworthy matters as working cooperatively with colleagues, and "two-way communication" with parents. "Professional contributions" was a list of mostly familiar items, such as supervising student teachers, participating in curriculum development, taking "professional leadership," and the like.

The focus of these criteria was plain enough: good teaching, community service, good relations with parents, and professional work beyond the classroom. Nonetheless, there still was plenty of room for differences of opinion about what each criterion meant, and whether a given teacher had met the mark. Evanston's 1965 plan tried to solve that problem by avoiding a search for scientific truth in favor of a decision-making process based on professional knowledge. Thus, teachers who wanted track movement had to apply for it, and each applicant had to document his accomplishments. Applicants were enjoined to "be specific with details, dates, and all necessary information that will clarify ... what you have done." When teachers had documented their meritorious work, their applications would go to district advisory committees composed chiefly of teachers. The committees (one for elementary and one for middle schools) would read the applications and make the decisions.

Here was a process that legitimated decisions about merit pay by delegation to professionals. Initiative and presentation of evidence rested with individual teachers, and decision-making rested with a committee that was selected by lot from a pool of possible teacher representatives, all of whom had been elected by teachers. Teachers had to figure out what meritorious teaching was and who should get it, subject to guidelines that had been devised by teachers and administrators. It was a serious procedure, and a clever way of solving some traditional problems with merit pay schemes.

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But if this arrangement solved some problems, it seemed gradually to create others. One problem arose from the vagueness of the concept "meritorious," and from the injunction to "be specific"; for the applications quickly escalated in size and detail. The teachers' documentation became "dissertations . . . the system became cumbersome." Some applications ran as long as 50 pages. Such a monument to oneself was not easy for many teachers to build; it took time, required careful record-keeping on one's work, and also seemed to require that teachers brag. A second problem was that some applicants were better at producing a convincing document than at teaching. One long-time staff member said that "if you could write a good application you got it," quite apart from whether you were a good teacher. Another problem, less predictable but fascinating, was that the teachers' committees that passed on applications turned out to be quite conservative. Instead of rolling logs and trading pork, "the teachers were very hard on each other." As a result, it became difficult to move from one track to another.

So an ingenious process for managing a difficult set of issues produced a new set of problems. In a district with lots of good teachers, lots of good teachers did not get merit pay. As time wore on, discontent mounted, creating pressure for yet another revision. The school district administration gave an additional push by initiating a new system of teacher evaluation, in the middle-to-late 1970s. The administration's reasons for the new system appeared to have little to do with changing merit pay: It simply wanted a better way to assess teachers' performance. Administrators worked in close consultation with teachers and teacher union representatives and produced a procedure that had two main parts. One was annual evaluation in terms of specific job targets jointly selected by each teacher and his principal; the other was a general performance appraisal which ranged over much broader and more diverse issues. The only requirement in the first part was that the job targets have some bearing on student performance—though students' actual achievement was never considered. The general performance appraisal, however, drew heavily on the mid-1960s merit pay plan. It set out a list of evaluative criteria that were taken almost entirely from the old criteria of meritorious teaching. And it specified that teachers should write a narrative—seemingly a short form of the old merit application—reporting on their performance within those categories. The job target evaluation, by contrast, was carried out by principals, and it always included observation of classroom teachers.

The evaluation scheme seemed to balance administrative and teacher interests reasonably well, and it contained a new scoring ar-

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rangement. Teachers would be awarded one of four ratings: "exceeds expectations," "meets expectations," "needs to improve," and "unacceptable." After the new evaluation plan had been in operation for a time, Evanston teachers decided that it should be substituted for the old merit pay application procedures. While teachers have some problems with the new evaluation—there are variations between schools in the criteria which principals choose to emphasize—they had more problems with the old merit pay system. As a result, in 1982 a new merit pay arrangement which tied track movement for teachers to their ratings on the new evaluation came into operation.

At first glance this looks like a lovely marriage of efficiency and participatory government. But matters were not quite that simple. The old merit pay criteria, which were used as a basis for the appraisals, embodied a diverse list of criteria for merit. To be sure, classroom performance topped the list, but professional accomplishment and community service were amply represented. All are desirable qualities in a school system, and perhaps even essential for good schools, but one effect of including several criteria of merit was to dilute the importance of classroom work—or perhaps to add "extra pay for extra work" onto the idea of "extra pay for excellent teaching." This may not be a bad idea but it is not the first thing that comes to mind when merit pay is mentioned.

Another qualification about the Evanston system is that excellent teaching is not the only way to move into a higher track. Teachers who get scores of "exceeds" can move across tracks more quickly, but teachers who simply "meet expectations" can still move across tracks: It just takes longer. In fact, the only teachers who cannot move at all are those rated "unacceptable" or "needs to improve." As one teacher with many years of service in the district told us: "The current system was initiated by teachers because they wanted the movement across tracks to be automatic . . . this would make it more accessible." He went on to point out that anyone can get to the third track simply by getting "meets expectations" ratings. Moving beyond that to the two top tracks could be done by combining those same scores with a master's degree, some graduate course credits beyond the M.A., and a good deal of community and professional service.

This certainly means that teachers would have to work hard to get to the top, and that they would have to be good teachers. It is also plain that teachers who got the top ratings would rise faster. But excellence in the classroom is not *required* to get to the top of the scale. One could do it by simply "meeting expectations," by doing a good deal of community and professional service, and by persisting. Teachers in Evan-

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ston, by the way, consistently told us that in their view, "meets expectations" was the equivalent of a grade of "C."

Not surprisingly, Evanston teachers have a generally positive view of these arrangements. For one thing, they had a large hand in devising and revising all parts of the plan; for another, they made out rather well financially. At the end of the 1983 school year, for instance, something in excess of 55 percent of all the teachers were on track three or above, and nearly a third were in the top two tracks. The average salary in the district was about $26,000, and roughly a third of the teachers were earning more than $30,000 annually. Teachers did not regard these results as surprising, given that Evanston has long recruited unusually good teachers. And they reminded us that the salaries were not unduly high, considering these teachers' experience, their job requirements, their quality, and preparation. But they are good salaries as teaching salaries go. Teachers and administrators did tell us again and again that the Board of Education worried that too many top ratings had been handed out. It also may trouble some officials that, as one teacher put it, track movement for competent teachers is pretty much immune to administrators' views. Even if principals do not think highly of a given teacher, "you can always progress, even without high administrator evaluations, if you work at it long enough."

But these results do not entirely explain the Evanston teachers' approval of merit pay. Teachers there seemed to like merit pay also because they saw it as part of the district's emphasis on quality education. One teacher told us that "parents have a profound effect on teacher performance here. They expect good teachers, excellent teachers, and they aren't hesitant to pass that expectation on to the teachers and to the Superintendent." Like everyone else, she knew that the district had hired and kept good teachers, and merit pay was one modest reflection of that reputation. One administrator, speaking of the district's teachers, said, "We work hard to screen people out. I have to thank the teachers' association for much of that. They don't fight relentlessly for a bad teacher. They check to see that we are doing everything legally, of course. But they want to see bad teachers out too." He also suggested that the values embodied in the merit pay plan did not arise from the plan, but from long-standing community traditions. On teaching, for instance, he attributed quality to "the composition of the community . . . there is almost a haughtiness to it . . . When you have that kind of community, eventually you get a different kind of teacher." And in discussing community involvement and professional service, he noted that "it's almost impossible to live here without being

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involved. You can't live here without someone coming to your door and asking you to work...." The criteria for track movement simply reflected community values and practices: "Because of the kind of community this is, teachers don't see it [service and involvement] as unusual."

These comments closely resembled what we heard in Virginia Beach. There were many important differences in the two districts' merit pay plans, most notably the prominent role of the Evanston scheme compared with the modesty of the Virginia Beach plan. Despite these differences, when teachers tried to explain why merit pay made sense, their comments were similar: They saw the schemes as part of a broader commitment to quality in education. Merit pay struck them as an expression of that commitment, and perhaps as a modest reinforcement for it, but not as a basic cause of quality. So Evanston teachers, like their colleagues in Virginia Beach, support merit pay for what many of its fans would regard as the wrong reason: because merit rewards reflected community esteem for good teaching, not because they seemed a strong or particularly effective way to improve teaching.

In retrospect it is not surprising that community traditions should be at least as important as design features in explaining why merit pay appears to work in these communities. But then, in retrospect nearly anything in social science can seem unsurprising. At the outset we had not expected local traditions to loom so large, nor has this point been much stressed in either the research or the prophetic literature on merit pay. We stress the point because it throws a somewhat novel light on how merit pay works, and why.

Keeping a low profile: Midland

In this connection, consider another of our districts—Midland, Texas, a system of about 17,500 students that is situated in a small and rather well-to-do oil and financial center. To judge by the plan's design, Midland would seem to have committed a major *faux pas*, since less than 6 percent of its eligible teachers have won merit pay even though the plan provides rather sizable rewards and has been working for more than half a dozen years. Midland has a four-track teacher advancement plan, much like Evanston, and advancement across the tracks is keyed to a very similar evaluation scheme. Good classroom evaluations are required for advancement to any track, but making it onto the top two tracks also requires considerable professional and community service. Teachers who make it onto the first track, which means that they are no longer probationary novices, receive only a

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$1,000 annual increment. But moving to track two produces $2,000, to track three $3,000, and to track four $4,000 annually. The awards last four years, and then re-application is required.

This seems like a tidy little package of political dynamite: ample rewards, closely tied to teachers' advancement and thus to status within the district, and all bound together in a rather elaborate package of teacher evaluation. Yet participation rates are very low. Teachers in Midland nevertheless gave the plan favorable reviews. How can that be explained?

Part of the answer does seem to lie in the plan's design. First, the evaluation criteria in Midland cover the same three bases as those in Evanston: classroom performance (observed by principals), professional accomplishment, and community relations. Merit is not exactly detached from classroom work, but the importance of classroom work is reduced by the inclusion of other values. For instance, teachers cannot reach level two without earning an M.A. degree. They cannot reach levels three or four without doing a good deal of community and professional work outside the classroom, and earning either 15 or 30 credit hours (levels three and four, respectively) beyond the M.A. Teachers who aspire only to excellence in the classroom are thus effectively barred from the top three levels of the Midland system. One way of looking at these requirements is to say that they broaden merit criteria to make merit pay more attractive to teachers: That is, they take the heat off classroom performance. But another way of looking at them is this: They permit good teachers—or any teachers, for that matter—to remain outside the merit advancement system without raising any questions about the quality of their classroom work; they can point to the educational requirements as the reason for their not gaining the salary increments. As in all the districts that we studied, student performance is not mentioned.

A second feature of the design that helps to explain why merit pay works in Midland is that teachers seem to have played an important part in devising the scheme. They served with administrators in the mid-1970s on a committee that reviewed reports on merit pay in other districts, and they helped to work out the evaluation criteria and procedures. They also serve with administrators on the committee that reviews and decides on teachers' applications for merit pay. Merit pay works in Midland, then, partly because, as in Evanston, the scheme has been politically legitimated by teachers' participation. In addition, the Midland program seems to have quite a low profile—unlike Evanston. Teachers seem uninterested in who is on or off the merit ladder, and some seemed unaware of details of the plan. While the

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district announces the results, it does so in a distinctly low-key manner, in the board of education minutes.

Finally, to win merit pay Midland teachers must apply and must document their claims. And despite local administrators' insistence that much of the decision about merit rests on the principal's observations, documentation seems to loom large in both the application and in the results. The district's guidelines remind teachers that their application "should be based largely on documenting your . . . performance as a teacher." It requires "signed statements from your departmental chairperson, principal, coordinators and/or support personnel who are in a position to observe your work" to support such claims as "shows evidence of effective lesson planning." And it enjoins applicants to document their performance on each criterion "as specifically as possible." Local informants disagreed about the impact of these requirements. Administrators responded negatively to our questions about the possibility that the documentation requirements would reward skill in presentation and organization, rather than in teaching. But several teachers took the opposite view. One told us that in her view presentation was very important, and that "being able to type" gave her a real advantage. Another teacher, who was a strong ideological partisan of merit pay, lost out in his first several applications. Upon inquiring about the reasons, he was led to suspect that he "had turned in a pretty skimpy amount of documentation." He had assumed, he said, that "they know me and what I'm doing." But after the rejections he took another tack: "I pulled out all the stops. I really played their game and went overboard, I guess. I documented things that I thought were asinine . . . . I think I finally turned in a notebook with something like 257 pages." He got merit pay.

Each of these design features helps to explain why merit pay works in Midland, despite the fact that only a few teachers get the rather good awards. But there are other explanations as well. First, when we asked why so few teachers applied for merit pay, and why so few seemed to worry about not getting the awards, administrators and teachers reminded us that Midland is an affluent little city. One top official pointed out that the financial incentives for applying were not that strong, considering the economic context: The district's salary scale is one of the highest in the state, and many of the teachers have spouses who work in oil or finance. More money was said to be much less important to them than good working conditions. In fact, he pointed out, a disproportionate number of those who received merit pay were divorced mothers. Second, Midland schools had a solid reputation for quality, and teachers knew it. They liked working in a dis-

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trict with good students, a tradition of support for education, and a good name.

Teachers thus had at least two reasons to be pleased that they were working in Midland, quite apart from merit pay. From this angle, the low participation in Midland looks much less provocative than we first thought, partly because merit pay looks much less prominent than we first thought. General affluence surrounding the schools reduced the importance of merit increases within them, and the community's strong support for education provided plenty of non-monetary reasons for teachers to like working there. In Midland, as in Evanston and Virginia Beach, one reason that merit pay seems to work is that it blends easily into the local woodwork.

The meaning of success

A cynic might say that this is just a fancy way of admitting that our districts are places in which nearly everything seems to work well. If all we have found is that merit pay works when the living is easy, who cares? While it is useful to know that this scheme can work in places that have all the advantages, does that tell us anything about what would happen if merit pay were tried in places that had fewer advantages? After all, we did not find any current examples of merit pay schemes that worked in districts that enrolled mostly disadvantaged students, or in districts that had poor quality schools, or in districts that had fractious labor-management relations. Nor did we find large school districts in which merit pay worked.

There is something to this view: If we take past practice as a guide, merit pay seems unlikely to work in many American school districts, among them the districts most in need of improvement. But one purpose of our study was to understand what implications successful merit pay plans might have for school improvement, so this limitation seems useful, and timely to report. Even apart from that point, though, the cynic's objection is a little too simple. For one thing, past practice is not a perfect guide. It is possible that some less advantaged districts could capitalize on the experiences of the schools that we studied and successfully implement their own merit pay plans. For another thing, professionals in our districts put a good deal of time and thought into devising artful versions of this old idea. Had they been less artful, merit pay almost certainly would have blown up in their faces—even though community support for teaching was strong. Such pro-education districts, after all, are notable for having more (and more critical) citizen participation in school affairs than most local education authorities.

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The systems we have examined thus far, then, are notable for a conjunction between good design and community values. Merit reward plans for teachers seem capable of surviving when:

- communities are economically and socially advantaged, have decent salary schedules, and enjoy good labor-management relations;
- the criteria of merit include a broad conception of teacher performance that is unconnected to student performance, and when the scheme operates within a carefully crafted framework in which the definition of merit and the award process are legitimated by political and professional rather than scientific means.

These are not prescriptions but rather generalizations from the experience of a special set of school systems. Other districts might succeed if only they met some of these criteria.

We should issue one more disclaimer. Our analysis is neither an endorsement of merit pay for teachers nor an exhaustive account of its impact. Readers will notice that we have so far employed a rather narrow criterion of success, considering only whether the schemes were politically viable: Did they last, and if so, were they well-regarded, or the focus of bitter contention? These are not trivial points, as those who have observed or participated in efforts to improve public education will know, but they are hardly the whole story. For innovations can succeed in any or all of these senses without seeming to succeed in others—such as improving instruction. Not a few academic kibitzers on the Great Society amused themselves for quite a few years, telling just such success stories. Is that the sort of story we are telling here? Did merit pay improve teaching in our districts?

The answers are a little complicated. First, no one told us that merit pay itself improved teachers' classroom work. Several teachers said that the plans discussed here affected instruction, but it was the evaluation, as much or more than the raises, to which they pointed. And even these teachers saw only marginal changes. Nearly all the teachers regarded merit pay simply as recognition for good teaching. One teacher in Evanston echoed the views of many others when she said, in response to one of our queries about the effects of merit pay, "it's nice, it lets you know there is something out there for your work."

It is of course possible that most teachers missed the point; that money rewards for good teaching encouraged better teaching but did so unwittingly. We cannot rule out this alternative, but we are inclined to be skeptical. One reason for our caution is that so many different teachers made the same point, all quite independently. Another reason is that many teachers freely admitted that merit pay had an effect in

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other areas. Quite a few testified, for example, that the extra pay for extra work was what kept them involved in professional activities and community service. We could think of nothing that would explain teachers' recognition of an incentive effect in one area and their lack of recognition in another. Nor could we think of a reason to believe one set of teacher testimony and not another. Someone might argue that because teachers' classroom work is so central to their professional identities, they would be unwilling to acknowledge influences on that aspect of their performance. But this view was directly contradicted by teachers who praised the evaluation systems in several of the districts. They said that the observation and analysis of their classroom work helped to improve it.

Another reason to doubt that fiscal incentives had an appreciable or consistent effect on performance is that teachers had a plausible alternative account of the incentives for performance in their trade. When we asked teachers what motivated them to do good work, their answers were all consistent with what one woman in Virginia Beach told us: "Every once in a while the light bulb goes on in a kid's head." Another likened her work to the theater: "Children are a great audience, you can see if you are boring them to death . . . when I hit, it feels good, it's like acting, you are on stage, they either make you or break you." Another teacher summed up these ideas nicely when he told us that "student support is the biggest motivation. The harder they try the harder I try."

Each of these teachers was calling attention to the interactive nature of their work, and to the way in which incentives for performance were therefore anchored in that interaction. Teachers' work consists largely in efforts to improve others, or to help them improve. Unlike surgeons or dermatologists, teachers need active cooperation and engagement from their students, not just passive acceptance of a treatment. Students, therefore, hold the key to teachers' success. When students try hard and do well, they make it possible for teachers to succeed. If students do not make the effort, there is no way that teachers can score an instructional success. Students' efforts thus control some of the most powerful incentives for teachers' performance. This is part of what many teachers meant when they told us that the motivation for their work was "intrinsic," rather than being monetary. Money is important to teachers, but the largest rewards come from student achievement.

This perspective on teaching helps to explain why so many teachers prefer students who work hard, especially those who also do well. It also helps to explain why teachers do not suggest money incentives

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when they are asked about ways to improve their work with students. Teachers would like higher salaries, but few say that their teaching would improve if they were paid more. They do say that better salaries might help to recruit and hold more good teachers. But when asked how to improve their work, teachers point instead to things like fewer students, better materials, and more time to prepare and to correct lessons. Teachers can see how such changes would help them and their students to "turn the light on." This is not to say, of course, that money incentives would not help, but it does suggest that there is a hierarchy of incentives for teachers and that money is not near the top of the list.

One last reason we are inclined to accept teachers' testimony on this point is that it was generally supported by management. Few administrators claimed that merit pay improved teachers' work in classrooms, even though they had the strongest reason to make such claims. The superintendent in Midland, for example, was very positive about the system he had helped to install in that district. He thought that the incentives for professional activity and community involvement had worked. He thought that teachers had benefited from the "self-examination" associated with the evaluation and documentation requirements. He even thought that those teachers who had been promoted "refined their performance" as a result of the self-examination. But he emphasized that the merit increases were rewards, not incentives. And he said, "these were good teachers already—this program didn't make them good teachers." Moreover, he made no claim that the rewards had inspired better work from other teachers.

Do incentives improve performance?

Our conclusion on the educational impact of merit pay is therefore mixed. On the one hand, there is no evidence that the money had an appreciable or consistent positive effect on teachers' classroom work. On the other hand, there is a fair amount of evidence that it did encourage some teachers to do the sorts of work outside the classroom that many educators consider important. There is some evidence that the evaluation requirements associated with some merit pay plans were useful to some teachers. In addition, there is quite consistent evidence that these merit pay schemes helped many teachers to feel better about their work because the schemes seemed to express support for good teaching.

All of these are relatively positive effects of merit pay. Even if none of the effects is central to instruction, and even though no one claimed that they were large effects, they cut so cleanly against the grain of the worries mentioned by opponents of merit pay—conflict, favoritism,

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demoralized teachers, and the like—that they seem particularly worth mentioning. Of course, it is also worth recalling our cautions about the special nature of these districts.

We noticed one other effect of merit pay. The schemes helped school administrators to justify spending money on education to their boards, and it helped both boards and administrators to make the same argument to their communities. One administrator in Midland told us that he did not think that the teacher incentives were the most important feature of that district's merit pay plan. "I would describe it as an attempt on the part of the school board and administration to have some type of device to justify paying teachers extra money." When asked why such justifications were needed, he said: "I think the demand is coming from school board members and patrons of the schools. Especially when teachers go in and . . . ask for additional pay, they want to know how the money is being used."

Seen in this light, then, merit pay played an important role in the districts' political transactions—especially school finance and teacher salaries. This phenomenon was not confined to the free-market oriented states of the Sunbelt. One of the other districts we visited was Niskayuna Central, a small, white-collar suburban district in upstate New York's Mohawk River valley. Niskayuna has had merit pay for roughly 30 years, almost since the district was first organized, in fact. Everyone there seemed happy with the plan. There is a teachers' union in Niskayuna, and the schools have a strong reputation for quality. Community support for education seems high. Despite all these considerations, professionals in the district thought that the plan was important in the local politics of education. One high-level administrator told us that merit pay "does give the school board and the community the feeling that they've got some control over the staff. There is an evaluation process here and the process can be used in a way which will reward the good and punish the wicked." In Niskayuna and other districts, merit pay helped to convince board members and voters that the district was taking a responsible and even tough managerial line, and that under such circumstances spending additional money on education was defensible.

These points lead to another interesting conclusion about the educational effects of merit pay. In some of our districts, at least, the plans seem to have been most useful for their political symbolism. For merit pay is one of those rare political devices that can broadcast different messages at the same time. It seemed to tell teachers that their work was valued while telling elected officials and constituents that management was taking a tough line with the hired help. Few school im-

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provement schemes can serve such diverse purposes; it is thus little wonder that school people in these communities seemed so attached to merit pay—even if no student's achievement improved.

Under limited circumstances, then, merit pay appears to have some educational merits. But these seem to lie more in the domain of political symbolism than in that of classroom performance. This is an important domain, to be sure, and one in which many issues that do bear on education, even on classroom work, are decided. But these are not the benefits that proponents of merit pay have advertised. The districts that persevered with the idea turned it in quite a different direction, in this as in other respects.

Do plans deteriorate?

Thus far, the story we have told is a sunny one, even if it has had some unexpected twists. One theme in our analysis has been that when merit pay for teachers works, it does so because of a happy conjunction of human craft and social circumstance. The communities we examined had thoughtfully-designed plans for rewarding teacherly merit, but they also had values, finances, and staffs which made it relatively easy for the merit pay plans to work constructively. If this happy interaction helps to explain the success of merit pay in some districts, it seems nonetheless to be responsible for a curious deterioration in some plans. For several of the districts that we visited have grown progressively less able to maintain distinctions between meritorious and non-meritorious teachers, in part because so many of the teachers were so good. Ironically, the relatively high quality of education that made it possible for merit pay to work seems also, over time, to defeat merit distinctions between teachers.

What are the dynamics of this curious situation? Part of the answer is that in good schools, merit pay puts administrators in a bind; the good teachers in such schools do not see much distance between themselves and the very good teachers. They therefore get upset if the very good teachers are assigned a higher status, and given more money to boot. From the school managers' perspective, the generally high quality of their staff—which makes them a pleasure to work with—makes merit pay a potential headache. We were given rather vivid testimony on this point in Niskayuna. While teachers there seemed quite happy with merit pay, school administrators told us that they had encountered difficulties in making distinctions between outstanding teachers and those who were merely quite good. For instance, one principal told a story of rating a teacher as "outstanding" (the next-to-top rating), rather than "exceptional" (the top rating). The teacher walked

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away and said, "If that's all you care, that's all you get." According to the principal, "she defined a new role for herself, did not attempt to provide additional evidence of work.... She has determined that there is more to life than teaching, and has gone right on her merry way.... Her classroom performance wavered after the evaluation ... now it is as good as it was, but it has not improved.... I don't think her potential has been reached. I point directly to the merit."

In this principal's view, making distinctions between very good and merely good teachers was counterproductive, for it created resentment and alienation rather than encouraging the good teachers to do even better. Given the skewed distribution of teacher quality in his district—a high average, and a rather tight dispersion around the average—merit pay would be a problem if not managed very carefully. Principals in other districts took a similar view. None of them reported any problems with giving low ratings to poor teachers or to teachers in need of considerable improvement. But many principals had trouble making distinctions among the large majority of their teachers, who were all at least good. One administrator in Evanston reported his way of managing this problem—a device that seemed common in these two districts. He said, "I like operating on the positive. I think giving people the 'exceeds' [the top rating] ... makes them feel good, and when they feel good they do more." His approach to managing merit pay, then, was to avoid absolute accuracy within the large pack of good teachers. Instead, he slightly inflated the ratings of the good-but-not-tops teachers. The inflated ratings were at least a defense against discouragement and jealousy, and perhaps, as he claimed, also a boost to teachers' performance. If this view is correct, there is a nice twist here: In some cases, honest merit ratings create disincentives for teachers' improvement, and dishonest ratings are more likely to produce positive effects.

If many administrators followed this practice of grade inflation, then over time ratings would tend to cluster at the top. This is what seemed to happen in Evanston and Niskayuna. But it is worth noting that a skewed distribution of quality is not the only source of this result. For one thing, the principals' managerial position is more vulnerable than that of many other executives: Principals depend on teachers more than teachers depend on them. Teachers, after all, work in their own self-contained classrooms, and they often can get along decently even if their principal is a boob. A good principal can help teachers, of course, but good principals are not required for teachers to do their jobs. Principals, by contrast, need teachers who do good work if their school is to run well—and if the principal is to be seen as doing a

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good job. A pack of poor teachers can probably do more to wreck a principal's working life, and perhaps his reputation, than poor principals can do to damage teachers' work and reputations. Because good principals know this, they try hard to avoid upsetting their good teachers. Needless to say, giving some good teachers merit awards while withholding them from other good teachers could ruffle a few feathers.

An additional complication is that most teachers in most school buildings are now tenured, and have been for the duration of the merit pay plans that we studied. As a result, barring incompetents, principals have not had many alternatives to the staff members already there. This constraint puts a good deal of pressure on principals to avoid alienating teachers, since the teachers are unlikely to go away, even if unhappy. For another thing, there is not a long line of talented applicants at most schoolhouse doors. Recent developments—a surplus of teachers due to layoffs and enrollment decline, shrinking teacher income, and criticism of schools—have reduced applications. Good applicants seem few and far between. One elementary teacher said that her student teachers in recent years had been of "low quality" and getting worse. A high school principal told us that of all the student teachers who had worked in his building in the preceding two years, only one was worth hiring. He noted that many application letters are so full of misspellings that he simply throws them away. Even if tenure had vanished yesterday, then, the absence of talented replacements would impel principals to husband their existing staffs. But the combination of tenure and a shortage of talented replacements powerfully presses school managers toward school improvement strategies that will not offend teachers who already are doing reasonably well. In Niskayuna and Evanston, principals redefined merit pay so that it became such a strategy.

Excellence and incentives: an unexpected paradox

This part of our story is full of lively implications. One is that merit rewards seem to be sensitive to the existing distribution of merit. This is not a point that we have found anywhere in the literature on merit pay, and it strikes us as important. If high average quality and a modest dispersion of quality around the mean tend to defeat individual incentives for quality performance, would the same thing be true in populations with low average quality and a similarly tight dispersion? Would merit pay work better in populations with a larger dispersion of quality, and a more average average? Or is decay an inevitable response, in any distribution of quality, because managers want to avoid trouble?

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Our districts offer no unambiguous answers to these questions. On the matter of decay, Midland has a very low participation rate, and that district's restrictions on access and its general affluence make it likely that participation will remain low. But if there seems to be no danger that merit pay will expand toward universal coverage in Midland, the price of this solution seems to be a program which is quite marginal to district operations, and in which only a few teachers get beyond the first step. If one were to draw a moral about the decay of merit pay plans from the Midland story, then, perhaps it would be that in high quality districts, program insignificance is the price of avoiding a drift toward universal coverage.

Another of the districts that we visited—Catalina Foothills, an affluent suburb of Tucson, Arizona—sheds a complementary light on the matter. This is a small district, with about 85 teachers in three schools that enroll students whose parents are mostly professionals. Test scores are reported to be the highest of all districts in the state. Five or six years ago a new superintendent was hired, apparently in part because test performance had wavered. He fired most of the school principals, hired a new assistant superintendent, and set out to clean house. The assistant superintendent said that "we have released 21 teachers over the last five years. We are literally weeding out the bottom ranks of our teachers. And at the same time we are recruiting really good teachers." Soon after he arrived, the new superintendent also instituted a merit pay plan, aimed at rewarding good performance among teachers. The plan is rather limited: The awards are generally modest (between $300 and $1,200 annually), and teachers are strongly encouraged to use them either for professional development (such as attending workshops) or for classroom improvement (additional materials or equipment). The awards are made annually, and must be renewed from year to year.

The result has been what the assistant superintendent termed "an interesting problem." Due to the recruitment of bright young teachers—Catalina Foothills is the only district in the state that recruits out of state—and firings of poorer teachers, "we see the range of performance among teachers compacting, and actually moving up to the higher end of the continuum. And the bottom is definitely moving up." As a result, the proportion of teachers receiving merit pay has grown: At the end of four or five years, nearly every teacher now working in the district seems to have received a merit award. One top administrator estimated that the percentage of teachers who have not participated was "very small." So, in Catalina Foothills, improving the quality of the teaching staff seems to have helped push merit pay

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toward universal coverage. This story appears to be consistent with the drift of our analysis: The more uniformly good a teaching staff is, the more difficult it will be to maintain quality distinctions, and the more likely that merit pay will drift toward universal coverage.

Our story also suggests another point concerning limits on merit incentives: They are sensitive to the circumstances in which they operate, as well as to the distribution of quality. Labor markets are one such circumstance. When there is no queue of qualified replacements, performance incentives will be weakened. When most employees are tenured, monetary incentives for performance may be ineffective, or even counterproductive. Many commentators on education seem oblivious to these points. They often view merit pay as a counterweight to the evils of tenure, but our investigation makes it plain that merit pay can just as well be problematic under conditions of tenure, degrading rather than improving teachers' work. A last point about constraints on merit incentives is that constraints can interact. We found a relatively high and tight distribution of quality, combined with tenure and market signals about weak replacement quality. The combination tended to make school managers cautious about merit pay. Their caution strikes us as rational.

These observations may have application beyond education, or merit pay, or both. A second set of points also may have some resonance beyond schools. For we think that the quality constraints on merit rewards discussed here help to explain certain common features in the merit pay plans that we investigated. One such feature was that most merit pay plans were organized around scales with rather small steps. In situations where everyone thought there was a narrow dispersion of quality among workers, finely-graded rewards seemed to be a way to manage the problem of comparisons. Another common features was that no district made merit reward depend mainly on classroom performance. Instead, rewards depended in large part on voluntary, extra-curricular achievements. In situations where most teachers thought that they were equally good at teaching, making rewards depend on voluntary work outside of teaching seemed a wise way to manage comparison problems.

Our point is not that these design features are due exclusively to the high and tight quality distribution of teaching. We have mentioned that other circumstances helped to produce these results. And we can easily imagine that the design features just mentioned could occur in districts with mostly poor quality teachers and a tradition of political patronage in schools. But in the districts we studied, it seems likely that these two design features owed something to the particular quality

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distribution of teaching. It also seems likely that similar quality distributions in other organizations could produce the same result.

These points imply caution about certain alternative designs for merit pay schemes. Some observers argue that rewards should depend only on classroom quality, but this strikes us as less likely to succeed than more catholic conceptions of merit. Several practitioners also told us that merit pay would work much better if the money incentives were more substantial, but we are skeptical about larger awards. Our analysis suggests that in districts like those studied here, really large awards could be explosive. A complicated web of positive sentiments, mutual obligations, and adaptations to circumstance keeps good schools running well. Trying to make large distinctions of quality in institutions where the staff correctly sees relatively small differences could be quite disruptive.

But the most important implication of this part of the story is that merit pay plans in good districts will tend, over time, to defeat themselves. In places where most teachers are good, merit pay will tend to become what one thoughtful administrator in Niskayuna called "an annuity." After considering his district's merit pay scheme, and reviewing merit pay more generally, he concluded that "both in industry and the public sector, merit assessments tend to become bland and the majority of employees move to the top of the schedules." The two districts that had the oldest merit pay plans—Niskayuna and Evanston—also had the largest percentage of teachers receiving merit awards. But even the district with the newest merit pay plan, Catalina Foothills, had a similarly large fraction of teachers on merit pay.

There is a nice paradox here. Merit pay schemes require distinctions among employees' quality; the idea is to reward the best and inspire the rest. In the districts that we studied, it seems that one reason it was possible to implement such plans was the generally high quality of the teaching staff. A skewed distribution of quality helped to make merit pay politically possible. But over time, this skewed distribution of quality seems to have encourage a movement toward universal coverage, which tends to erode the foundations of merit pay. The very attributes of design and community that make merit pay successful in the short run tend to make it self-defeating in the long run.

While some observers might regard this as a depressing conclusion, we take a different view. In the districts we studied, merit pay generally seemed to have been a positive step, and one important reason was that administrators and teachers took each other seriously, as partners in school improvement. By so doing they turned a notion that could have been damaging, even explosive, into a scheme that seemed to

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help. Another reason why merit pay proved beneficial was that teachers and administrators stuck to the job, changing and refining the plans during the course of several years. In some cases the plans were relatively new, while in others they have lasted for several decades. We observe that in several of these districts, merit pay became something of an "annuity," but that hardly means that it failed. It simply means that in social organizations, even the best-designed innovations decay, become routinized, or lose their punch as people adapt to them. Improving performance, or even maintaining a lively level of performance, sometimes requires trading in inherited schemes for newer models. Diamonds may be forever, but social innovations are not.

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Progressive liberalism and American "community"

WILLIAM A. SCHAMBRA

IN THE FINAL days of the campaign of 1984, the Democratic presidential nominee returned to a message that the Washington *Post* described as "the distilled essence of Walter Mondale." "Let us be a community, a family where we care for each other," he urged. "Let us end this selfishness, this greed, this new championship of caring only for yourself. Let's pull America back together.... We must be knit together by a band of love." Throughout his presidential campaign, Mondale in this fashion had insisted that the election of 1984 offered a stark choice between a Reagan America, characterized by greed, self-interest, and callousness, and his own America, graced by a sense of family or tightly-knit national community. Most political observers apparently accepted this characterization of the choice: When Mondale was decisively repudiated at the polls, they suggested that the private satisfactions flowing from the economic recovery had so dulled America's sense of caring and community that Mondale's message had simply been ignored. *Habits of the Heart*, a widely-reviewed treatment of the national character that appeared shortly after the elections, echoed the suggestion that the American people had turned away from community, toward selfish individualism.

This view of the 1984 results overlooks several crucial facts, however: The idea of national community had, in fact, been in decline for

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over a decade and a half prior to the election and, more important, it had been in decline *not* because of a resurgence of selfishness, but precisely because it had failed to provide America the sense of community promised. Furthermore, new and more potent ideas of community had arisen over this period, and it was President Reagan's ability to voice those new ideas that explains, in part, his election victory. We will better understand the election of 1984, and indeed American politics in general over the past two decades, if we look more closely at the decline of the idea of national community, and the rise of new ideas of community in its place.

The Great Society

Twenty years ago, the idea of national community was at its zenith. Lyndon Johnson had just been re-elected president by a margin that surpassed Reagan's 1984 showing, and at the heart of Johnson's program was the view that America is one united nation or community, joined by ties of brotherhood and neighborliness, characterized by a willingness to share mutually all benefits and burdens. In the course of that year's campaign, Johnson had outlined his understanding of America and its future: "I see a day ahead with a united nation, divided neither by class nor by section nor by color, knowing no South or North, no East or West, but just one great America, free of malice and free of hate, and loving thy neighbor as thyself." Johnson proclaimed that "I see America as a family" that "takes care of all of its members in time of adversity.... I see our Nation as a free and generous land with its people bound together by common ties of confidence and affection, and common aspirations toward duty and purpose."

The concept of national community provided Johnson with a powerful campaign theme in 1964, as it would subsequently for Walter Mondale in 1984. Barry Goldwater, Johnson's challenger in 1964, was an outspoken proponent of what were, at the time, highly controversial, conservative views. This permitted Johnson to contrast his own understanding of a united, moderate America with a Republican message that "flaunts the unity of our society" and that "invites extremism to take over our land." The mandate of the election, he insisted, "is going to be a mandate to unite this nation. It is going to be a mandate to bind up our wounds and to heal our history, and to make this Nation whole as one nation, as one people, indivisible under God."

The doctrine of national community also lay behind many of the slogans and expressions by which we remember the Johnson administration. Johnson described his program, for instance, as "The Great Society," thereby conjuring up precisely an image of America as one

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united society or nation. America, he argued, must "turn unity of interest into unity of purpose, and unity of goals into unity in the Great Society." It must be understood, however, that the idea of national community was, for Johnson, far more than a clever campaign slogan or a source of catchy phrases. The concept in fact explained and provided the moral underpinnings for many of the actual programs and policies of his administration. For the task of constructing the national community had not yet been finished, in his view. Significant portions of the American population remained on the fringes of the Great Society, deprived of a place of equal dignity in the national life by barriers of class or race. At the same time, those Americans already in the nation's mainstream were tempted by the great prosperity of the period to "drop out" of the national community—to shed the "common ties of confidence and affection" that bound them together, in order to indulge in purely hedonistic, private pleasures. A powerful, active federal government—especially a vigorous, articulate president—were required, according to Johnson, both to draw marginal groups into the national community, and to remind those already part of that community of their deep moral obligations to it, and to their fellow citizens.

Johnson explained his extensive civil rights program, for instance, as an effort to integrate into the national community a group of Americans that theretofore had been excluded from it by barriers of race. Blacks in America, he said, "have been another nation," for whom "the walls are rising and the gulf is widening." Now, however, they must be allowed "to share, share fully and equally, in American society," and "to be treated in every part of our national life as [persons] equal in dignity and promise to all others." Johnson understood this program of integration as part of the "often painful but always successful reconciliation of different people into our national community," which had been an "underlying theme in the history of the Republic."

The reconciliation of different people into the national community, Johnson believed, required attention to barriers created not only by race, but also those created by class and income; the continued existence of "poverty in the midst of plenty" represented a major challenge to the wholeness of the Great Society. The seemingly profound disparities of wealth that characterized an otherwise generally prosperous society, Johnson understood, posed a grave threat to the sense of national oneness, and so required remediation by an active central government. That government, then, would undertake a "war on poverty" — not to "make the poor more secure in their poverty," as traditional welfare programs had done, but rather to lift the poor out of the "cycle of poverty," to fold them into the broader national community

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through job training, education, health services, and other measures aimed as much at attitude as at incomes. It is worth noting that Johnson settled on the expression "*war* on poverty" precisely because war is, above all, a time when the clamor of self-interest is quieted by mutuality and a widespread, public-spirited devotion to the national interest. War, Johnson explained, evokes "cooperation ... [and a] sense of brotherhood and unity." The "military image" of the war on poverty, he argued, would "rally the nation" and "sound a call to arms which will stir people ... to lend their talents to a massive effort to eradicate the evil.

The goal of building a national community thus gave rise to significant portions of the Great Society's agenda: the integration of a significant marginal racial group into the larger society, and the elevation of the poor from the cycle of poverty into the national mainstream. This goal also made profound moral demands on the larger society, however, as the call to "war" suggests. Johnson clearly feared that the tremendous and now seemingly permanent prosperity enjoyed by most Americans could corrupt the national morality. It might well encourage people to indulge in purely private and material satisfactions and pleasures, with the result that the larger society would dissolve in a riot of self-interest. The doctrine of national community would counteract that tendency toward self-interested indulgence, by raising America's sights from the purely private and material to the public and spiritual. The Great Society, Johnson insisted, would not be a "society of private satisfaction for some in the midst of public squalor for all." Rather, America's "material progress [would be] only the foundation on which we will build a richer life of mind and spirit." Johnson's support for education and for the humanities and arts endowments, his conservation program, and the highway beautification initiative all were explained as ways to enhance the public and intellectual resources of the community over the private and material goods of the commercial society. The Great Society, Johnson maintained, would be "a place where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community."

In Johnson's view, then, the idea of national community entailed a rigorous call to unity, public-spiritedness, and compassion directed toward the nation as a whole, as well as a concrete series of programs designed to incorporate the unincorporated into the nation. That Johnson should have been such an ardent spokesman for national community is not unusual, given his conception of the presidential office. The president—the one nationally elected official in the land—was,

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for Johnson, the preeminent spokesman for national oneness. It was, above all, the president's task to summon the American people to their high moral calling. "As I conceive it," he noted, "a President's first role and first responsibility is to help perfect the unity of the people." It was "one of the great tasks of political leadership to make our people aware ... that they share a fundamental unity of interest and purpose and belief." And so Johnson devoted his presidency to the goal of "[keeping] us pulling together, keeping our ranks closed, keeping us loving our brother and our fellow man, instead of hating him, keeping us united before the world."

The tradition of progressive liberalism

That the idea of national community should have figured so prominently in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society is only to be expected, given the centrality of that concept in progressive liberal doctrine throughout the twentieth century.

Progressive liberalism had arisen early in the twentieth century as a response to what seemed at the time a grave crisis, namely, the erosion of the "natural" communities and associations of small town America beneath the tides of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. Progressive liberalism claimed that it simply was not possible to restore this earlier form of community (that had been the failed Populist response), but that it *was* now possible to move to a new and higher form of community—the national community. The essential instrument of this new and higher form would be a powerful and active federal government, or, more precisely, a powerful and active president. In Herbert Croly's compelling formulation, the Jeffersonian values of "community of feeling and ... ease of communication" could now be established within the nation as a whole, using the Hamiltonian instrument of an active central government. Or, as John Dewey described the liberal program, the "Great Society created by steam and electricity" would have to be converted into the "Great Community."

The central government, for instance, could tame through regulatory measures those great and disruptive concentrations of private power, the corporations, thereby turning them into "express economic agents of the whole community," as Croly put it. The government would also become "expressly responsible for an improved distribution of wealth," and would begin to alleviate, through the tax structure and social welfare programs, the inequalities of wealth that undermined the sense of national oneness. A vigorous program of "Americaniza-

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tion" would serve to integrate diverse immigrant populations into a single, coherent people. "Scientific management" and other new developments in the social sciences explained to government how enlightened, bureaucratic administration could order and direct toward public purposes the chaotic popular masses.

Behind these specific developments and programs, however, lay a larger moral project: the creation of a genuine national community which could evoke from the American people a self-denying devotion to the public good, a community in which citizens would be linked tightly by bonds of compassion and neighborliness. Americans would be asked to transcend their traditional laissez-faire individualism (which had been aggravated by the forces of modern industrialism) in order to bind themselves as one to the "national idea." As Croly put it in *The Promise of American Life*, there would have to be a "subordination of the individual to the demand of a dominant and constructive national purpose." America would come to be bound together by the "religion of human brotherhood" which "can be realized only through the loving-kindness which individuals feel... particularly toward their fellow-countrymen."

The catalyst of the national community, the articulator of the "national purpose," in the liberal view, was to be the president—the galvanizing, unifying voice of all the American people. The president's is the "only national voice in affairs," as Woodrow Wilson argued. He alone could unite and inspire the people by combining their many views into one, coherent view: "The voices of the nation unite in his understanding in a single meaning and reveal to him a single vision, so that he can speak ... the common meaning of the common voice." From the "bully pulpit" of the executive office, the president would summon from the American people the self-sacrifice, public-spiritedness, and compassion that the national community required.

World War I taught progressive liberalism the value of war as a device for cultivating self-sacrifice, public-spiritedness, and national oneness; John Dewey would speak approvingly afterwards of the "social possibilities of war." Walter Lippmann was pleased that "the war has given Americans a new instinct for order, purpose and discipline," and had served to "draw Americans out of their local, group and ethnic loyalties into a greater American citizenship." Liberalism would never forget the lessons of 1917-18, and would thereafter search constantly for the "moral equivalent of war," a kind of war that would energize the national community, without the actual spilling of blood.

Every "great" liberal president of the twentieth century following Wilson made the cultivation of the national community the central

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goal of his administration, pursuing policies to alleviate inequalities of wealth and power, bringing into the community marginal groups, calling upon Americans to put aside self-interest on behalf of the national interest (often using the technique of the "moral equivalent of war"), and nurturing compassion and fellow-feeling among the citizens of the nation. Franklin D. Roosevelt, for instance, sought to reduce disparities of income in America through such measures as the Social Security Act, and his National Labor Relations Act was designed to be a "recognition of the full membership of [labor] in the national community," as Samuel Beer put it. Roosevelt hoped to ease the class divisions that had been exacerbated by the Great Depression by calling in his first inaugural address for the sort of unity normally to be found only in times of military emergency. "We must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of the common discipline," he insisted. On another occasion, Roosevelt described the purpose of the New Deal as "extending to our national life the old principle of the local community." Americans, he affirmed, must consider themselves all neighbors: "The many are the neighbors. In a national sense, the many, the neighbors, are the people of the United States as a whole."

Similarly, we remember John F. Kennedy above all for his stirring call to Americans to put aside self-interest on behalf of the national interest: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." Concrete programs aside, Kennedy seemed to be able to make us feel as a nation that we were together, united, "moving again." "These are times that appeal to every citizen's sense of sacrifice and self-discipline," he said in 1960. "They call out to every citizen to weigh his rights and comforts against his obligations to the common good." The presidency, according to Kennedy, "must be the center of moral leadership—a 'bully pulpit' . . . for only the President represents the national interest." He must be "willing and able to summon his national constituency to its finest hour. . . to demand of them the sacrifices that would be necessary."

Finally, of course, we return to Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, and see there again the familiar elements of progressive liberalism's national community: the programs to alleviate inequality and to incorporate marginal groups, the summons to national oneness, the exhortations to public-spiritedness and compassion, the quest for the moral equivalent of war (in this case, a war on poverty). Twenty years ago, progressive liberalism's vision of national community had a solid grasp on America's political consciousness. That was the vision that Walter Mondale hoped America would again accept as the basis of a great national project in 1984. To understand Mondale's failure, we

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have to understand what happened to the progressive vision between 1964 and 1984, especially in the turbulent 1960s and early 1970s.

The decline of national community

If there was a central theme in the diverse currents of dissatisfaction and unrest that marked the period immediately following Johnson's election, it would have to be the loss of faith in the idea of national community that lay behind progressive liberalism. As Theodore White noted in *The Making of the President, 1968*, "alienation" became such a fashionable word in the politics of the period precisely because it captured this new skepticism: It was "the negative of the old words, the old faith that America was a community, and that government served the community." This loss of faith in the old form of community was accompanied (and partially caused) by an upsurge of faith in a new form—one that promised to overcome alienation. This new (or rather, very old) form focused on the intimate, participatory community to be found in small groups, family, neighborhood, church and ethnic and voluntary association.

One strand of this new view of community is to be found in the New Left thought of the 1960s. According to that thought, the society erected over the years by progressive liberalism was, in spite of its claims, radically anti-communitarian, characterized by the isolation and estrangement of its citizens. This was inevitable in a society governed by a massive, distant, alienating state bureaucracy, linked closely with giant business concerns in that unholy alliance the New Left came to call "corporate liberalism." Federal social programs issuing from that state were not, therefore, expressions of national community and compassion, but were merely cynical devices for "regulating the poor," as Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward put it.

The New Left developed, according to Mario Savio of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement, as people, especially students, began to realize that others were "quite as lonely as they are . . . quite as hungry for some kind of community as they are." The New Left hoped to satisfy that hunger for community through its doctrine of "participatory democracy." A society organized according to that principle would presumably devolve major political and economic decision-making to small, tightly-knit local groups, within which—as the Port Huron statement put it—people would mutually and equally "share in the social decisions determining the quality and direction of their lives." In this fashion, the Statement maintained, the new society could "bring people out of isolation and into community." According to

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Wini Breines, author of *Community and Organization in the New Left*, the early demonstrations and sit-ins organized by the Movement—characterized by "strength, solidarity, and caring... decentralization and spontaneity... participation and community"—confirmed the New Left's belief that participatory democracy was the best alternative to bureaucracy and alienation. Thus, as Greg Calvert of the SDS put it, "while fighting to destroy the power of the loveless anti-community, we would ourselves create the community of love—the Beloved Community."

The rejection of the idea of national community and the impulse toward smaller, more intimate communities also characterized the Black Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s. That movement repudiated the integrationist premise of Lyndon Johnson's civil rights measures, because the effort to draw blacks into the larger, national community was based, as Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton expressed it in *Black Power*, "on the assumption that there is nothing of value in the black community and that little of value could be created among black people." Blacks should instead begin to "recognize the need to assert their own definitions, to reclaim their history, their culture; to create their own sense of community and togetherness." Carmichael and Hamilton noted proudly that black communities "are the only large segments of this society where people refer to each other as brother"—a sure sign, they claimed, of a "growing sense of community."

The most immediate and important political expression of the Black Power movement was the demand for community control of the instruments of social order—above all, the local school, but also the police, sanitation services, and social welfare agencies. Carmichael and Hamilton thus insisted that "we must begin to think of the black community as a base of organization to control institutions in that community." By assuming control of those institutions, black neighborhoods would presumably move closer to self-government, and would begin to develop notions of citizenship among their (currently alienated) inhabitants. The neighborhood would be drawn together more tightly—would be reminded of its oneness—by the celebration of black culture and morality in the schools and other public places. Blacks at the local level would, in short, become more of a true community.

The new doctrines of decentralized community favored by the New Left and Black Power worked their way toward the mainstream of American politics (albeit in a modified form) through the presidential campaign of Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968. In *To Seek a Newer*

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World, Kennedy argued that the nation's slums could be transformed only through "new community institutions that local residents control, and through which they can express their wishes." He helped develop the Bedford-Stuyvesant Corporation as one demonstration of this new approach, he pointed out. But that experiment, Kennedy insisted, was important for the broader nation as well, "for the loss of the sense of community is not just a problem of the ghetto; it affects all of us." Citing Lewis Mumford's dictum that "democracy ... begins and ends in communities small enough for their members to meet face to face," Kennedy called for a "decentralization of some municipal functions and some aspects of government into smaller units, no matter what the race or economic status of the governed." This would "help us toward [Thomas Jefferson's] vision of participating democracy," an objective that had become "increasingly difficult in the face of the giant organizations and massive bureaucracies of the age."

A final note of dissatisfaction with the national community came in the 1960s and 1970s from small groups and neighborhoods located at the end of the political spectrum opposite that occupied by the New Left. Lower-middle class, white, "blue-collar" neighborhoods, usually connected to the old industrial cities of the North and East, usually heavily "ethnic" (of Southern and Eastern European origin), and often heavily Catholic, began to join the other groups expressing "alienation" from the federal government. That government—through what seemed to be cold, bureaucratic edict or equally cold judicial fiat—had launched an assault against the traditional prerogatives of locality and neighborhood to define and preserve their own ways of life. They were told that they could neither pray in the local school, nor ban forms of expression considered offensive and pornographic from the community, nor enforce standards of sexual conduct considered appropriate, nor define the conditions under which abortion might be proper. Their police forces seemed to have been robbed of the power to maintain the social order of the community, and crime flourished in the streets. Finally, the progressive liberal goal of a racially integrated national community often seemed to call for measures that eroded even further the authority of the community: Housing restrictions that had sustained ethnic homogeneity fell, seniority lists of union locals were disrupted, and, above all, children were bused from the hallowed neighborhood school to distant destinations.

The ethnic neighborhoods soon revolted against what seemed to be utterly insensitive intrusions by the federal bureaucracy and judiciary into their ways of life, and, for the first time since the Depression, their loyalties to the party of progressive liberalism came into question.

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Some spokesmen for the ethnics—Michael Novak foremost among them—suggested that behind the dissatisfaction with the Great Society lay a deeper unhappiness with the entire liberal project. Ethnics had been the prime victims of progressivism's Americanization programs, and of the effort to create one vast, homogeneous national community through rationalization, bureaucratization, and centralization. Now, Novak insisted in *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics*, the ethnic revolt signalled the end of acquiesence in that project, and a "turn toward the organic networks of communal life . . . family, ethnic groups, and voluntary association in primary groups." Though peculiarly ethnic in character, those organic networks were particularly promising remedies for the alienation of the broader public, including that of the young radicals; after all, Novak maintained, the New Left's "communalism . . . is a conservative reaction . . . trying to recapture the threads of human association cut during the rise of the industrial order." Novak hoped that the ethnic revolt would transform the party of homogeneous national oneness into an "Ethnic Democratic Party," whose "goal would be genuine cultural variety; strong communities of values, identity and conscience; strong families and neighborhoods."

Nonetheless, the immediate benefactor of white ethnic discontent seemed to be George Wallace, who tried to turn it to his own ugly purpose in the presidential campaign of 1968. Although Wallace attacked the Great Society from the flank opposite the one chosen by Robert Kennedy, Wallace's bitter, direct language nonetheless often seemed an eerie echo of Kennedy's. The people, Wallace insisted, are "fed up with strutting pseudo-intellectuals lording over them, writing guidelines . . . telling them they have not got sense enough to know what is best for their children or sense enough to run their own schools and hospitals and local domestic institutions." There had, therefore, been a "backlash against the theoreticians and bureaucrats in national government who are trying to solve problems that ought to be solved at the local level." The solution, according to Wallace, was, of course, decentralization: "The States of the Union [should] continue to determine the policies of their domestic institutions themselves . . . I recommend States Rights and local government and territorial democracy."

It appears, then, that although the "unmeltable ethnics" were defending established communities rather than trying to create new ones, their message was ultimately strikingly similar to those of the New Left and Black Power. They repudiated the idea of national community and its seemingly oppressive federal programs, and called for decentralization so that small, intimate participatory communities—such as are to be found in neighborhoods, local churches

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and unions, and ethnic and voluntary associations—could flourish at the local level.

. . . and the rise of an older idea

What explains the eclipse of the idea of national community during this period, and the rise of new notions of community? The answer in part is that the moral momentum of national community is extremely difficult to sustain. The project attempts to create artificially, at the level of the nation, a sense of mutuality and oneness that appears far more readily, almost "naturally," at the level of family and neighborhood. As noted earlier, this transfer is often possible in times of crisis, when the threat to the nation is sufficiently great that people do, indeed, feel obliged to pull together as one. The United States had experienced a succession of such crises since 1929—the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War—and liberalism had used them to maximum effect, to construct an ever-more powerful central government. The extraordinary community-mindedness of national crisis is very demanding, however, and therefore difficult to sustain for long—especially when real crises are not available, and liberal presidents must turn to "moral equivalents." A "war on poverty" simply is not as compelling as a real war, especially when it is declared at the end of an exhausting series of genuine national emergencies. (President Carter would later discover that a "war on the energy problem" is even less compelling as a moral equivalent.) The momentum of the idea of national community, sustained in part by perilous domestic and international developments since 1932, had simply given out by the mid-1960s.

With the moral foundations of the liberal project thus eroding, its programmatic superstructure—a massive, centralized federal government—was left in a peculiarly exposed and precarious position. Large segments of the American people no longer saw government as the instrument of high national purpose, having lost faith in that purpose. Government appeared, therefore, as a distant, alienating bureaucratic monstrosity, ceaselessly spawning intrusive, insensitive, and expensive programs. What had originated as the instrument of community now seemed to many the antithesis of community.

As faith in the idea of national community eroded, it was perhaps inevitable that the American people should have turned to the idea of community that finds expression in small, participatory groups such as family, neighborhood, and ethnic and voluntary associations. These *are*, after all, more "naturally" communities and hence easier to create and sustain, if only because (to adapt an argument of Tocqueville's) the

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connection between the individual's private interest and a larger group interest is easier to perceive in such limited gatherings.

Americans had, furthermore, added the authority of constitutional and political tradition to the authority of nature. The Constitutional Convention of 1787 had reserved a number of important governing powers to the states, including, implicitly, the considerable power to regulate the health, safety, and morals of their citizens. These federal features tended, more generally, to "send a powerful decentralizing impulse throughout the American system," as Martin Diamond pointed out. The permanent political structure thus served to keep alive the states and localities, and these, in turn, served to keep alive the spirit of the small, local community.

That had been, of course, precisely the intention of those who had argued on behalf of the federal features at the time of the Founding. The proponents of those features, the Anti-Federalists, maintained that true republicanism depended on the political vitality of the states and localities. Were public affairs to be put entirely in the hands of a powerful, distant, central government—and this, they charged, was the inevitable tendency of the proposed Constitution—citizens would soon lose interest in public matters. They would thereby cease to be citizens at all; in the not altogether inappropriate parlance of the 1960s, they would become "alienated." Republicanism required sustained attention to public affairs—that is, public-spiritedness or civic virtue—and that was possible only when government was close to the people, as were, allegedly, the state and local governments. Sustained attention to public affairs also required that citizens be "close" to one another, that is, that they feel themselves to be part of a genuine community. And such a closely-bonded community, in turn, required a rough equality of wealth and power, a homogeneity of population, and a commonly shared, rigorously inculcated moral or religious tradition. These conditions of community, the Anti-Federalists insisted, could again only be satisfied within the "small republics" of the states and localities.

Because the Anti-Federalists were responsible for those decentralizing features of our political tradition that sheltered and nourished small, local community, it is not surprising that the movements for decentralization in the 1960s should have echoed to some extent the arguments of the Anti-Federalists. These modern movements hardly reached to a concern with civic virtue in the fullest sense, of course. Nonetheless, in the New Left and Black Power movements we find the Anti-Federalist argument that individuals become citizens, and acquire a sense of control over their own affairs, only within the egalitar-

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ian "small republic" of the locality. In the defenders of the ethnic neighborhoods, we find an emphasis on homogeneity of population and the preservation of a common religious or moral tradition. And in all the modern movements, we find the Anti-Federalist contention that large, centralized government is ultimately alienating, and the preference for the small, local community.

The dissident currents of the 1960s were not, of course, the first historical recurrences of Anti-Federalist or small republican sentiments. We find a similar impulse behind the Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, and Populist movements. Nonetheless, progressive liberalism rested on the assumption that the small republican vision had been rendered forever obsolete by the profoundly disintegrative forces of modernity. As we have seen, liberalism's central promise was to restore a similar degree of community, at the level of the nation—to restore, in essence, the Anti-Federalists' small republic within the continental framework created by the Federalists' Constitution, using the Federalists' central government. The movements of the 1960s and 1970s indicated both that the small republic spirit had by no means perished in modern industrial America, and that the national community idea simply was not an adequate substitute.[1]

The resurgence of small republican sentiment was sufficiently strong in the 1960s and 1970s that it soon found its way from the Kennedy and Wallace wings of the Democratic party into the mainstream of American politics. Indeed, every president from 1968 to 1980 was compelled to accommodate that sentiment with decentralist rhetoric and programs; no one became president during this period without denouncing centralized, bureaucratic government, and promising to reinvigorate the states and small, local communities.

President Nixon, for instance, claimed that "a third of a century of centralizing power and responsibility in Washington has produced a bureaucratic monstrosity, cumbersome, unresponsive, ineffective." The centerpiece of his administration, he promised, would be a "New Federalism," in which "power, funds, and responsibility will flow from Washington to the States and to the people," through block grants and revenue sharing. The purpose of those programs would be to "restore to the States their proper rights and roles in the Federal

[1] In one sense, of course, the Great Society acknowledged—and may even have helped stimulate—the "small republican" renaissance, through its community action programs (CAPs). As Johnson noted, CAP was based on "one of the oldest ideas of our democracy, as old as the New England town meeting—determination at the local level." Nonetheless, if we may take Daniel P. Moynihan's word for it, Johnson was never entirely comfortable with the CAP idea, precisely because it focused on building local communities, rather than the national community.

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system with a new emphasis on and help for local responsiveness," and to "narrow the distance between people and . . . government." During the presidential campaign of 1972—and long after it had become apparent that he was unable or unwilling to put the brakes on the growth of government—Nixon insisted nevertheless that the "central question" of the election was: "Do we want to turn more power over to bureaucrats in Washington . . . or do we want to return more power to the people and to their State and local governments, so that people can decide what is best for themselves?" President Ford generally echoed these sentiments after Nixon's resignation. He pushed hard for the Community Development Block Grant program in 1974, for instance, because it would help "return power from the banks of the Potomac to the people in their own communities."

Ford was eventually ushered from office by a man who charged that the Republicans had, rhetoric notwithstanding, permitted the federal government to become far too large and inefficient. Jimmy Carter's schemes for government reorganization, zero-based budgeting, and sunset laws were designed to trim that government, and to prove that it could "serve basic human needs without proliferating wasteful, bloated bureaucracies." Cultivating his image as a man steeped in the moral and religious traditions of small town America, Carter promised a new emphasis on local community in his administration. He insisted during the campaign that "our neighborhoods and families can succeed in solving problems where governments will always fail," and that "the only way we will ever put the government back in its place is to restore the families and neighborhoods to their proper places." After the election, Carter created a new unit at the Department of Housing and Urban Development—the Office of Neighborhood Voluntary Associations and Consumer Protection—and turned it over to prominent neighborhood activist Father Geno Baroni, who helped launch a series of neighborhood development initiatives.

None of this is to deny that federal programs grew tremendously throughout the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations, in spite of rhetoric and initiatives to the contrary. The point, however, is that such growth came increasingly to be described as illegitimate—the product of programmatic inertia, entrenched interest groups, "iron triangles," new class bureaucrats, a fragmented Congressional structure—even by the presidents under whom such growth occurred. Federal programs no longer seemed to express or reinforce the profound moral and political project of building a national community. After 1968, presidents seldom affirmed in Lyndon Johnson's confident tones

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the centrality of the federal government in American life. No president spoke of building a "Great Society" in America.

Renaissance of the small republic

This context—the decline of the idea of national community during the 1960s and 1970s, and the resurgence of the idea of the small republic—is essential for understanding Ronald Reagan's victory over Walter Mondale in 1984. As noted, Mondale constructed his campaign around the revival of the ideal of national community. "My America is a community, a family, where we care for each other," he insisted. Not by accident was Governor Mario Cuomo—an eloquent spokesman for the nation-as-a-family idea—chosen to be the keynote speaker at the Democratic convention. The presidency, according to Mondale, was the epicenter of the national community: "When times are tough, it isn't easy to sense [our] kinship. But that is what a president is all about." The president's preeminent task, according to Mondale, was to "make us a community and keep us a community."

Ronald Reagan had failed miserably at that presidential mission, Mondale charged. Reagan had, in fact, split that community into prospering rich and languishing poor: "Ronald Reagan's strategy has been to divide us into two Americas—the thin veneer of the rich, who are doing better and better, and the rest who are doing worse and worse." Reagan had further undermined national neighborliness by cultivating through his policies the mean-spirited selfishness that liberalism so despises: "In Reagan's America, only the fittest and richest survive."

Mondale's charges apparently missed the target, at least in part because Reagan cannot be described as a conservative in the traditional, laissez-faire sense of the term. He is, rather, a neo-populist, and his message has therefore always been more complex than the simple-minded "rugged individualism" that for so long characterized conservative thought in America. Indeed, Reagan has, for most of his political career, spoken the new language of the small republic renaissance.

His 1976 campaign for the presidency, for instance, rested squarely on the small republic ideal. In the course of the campaign, Reagan attacked the federal government for having undermined local communities and associations in America: "Thousands of towns and neighborhoods have seen their peace disturbed by bureaucrats and social planners through busing, questionable education programs, and attacks on family unity." The remedy, he claimed, was a program of "creative federalism" that would turn back to the states and localities

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many of the functions that had been assumed by the federal government, thereby rehabilitating those units as genuine communities. Reagan captured precisely the small republican sentiment when he called for "an end to giantism, for a return to the human scale . . . the scale of the local fraternal lodge, the church organization, the block club, the farm bureau." This return was necessary, Reagan insisted, because "activity on a small, human scale creates the fabric of community."

The small republic ideal remained at the heart of Reagan's speech and actions after 1976. The Republican mantra of the 1980 campaign—"family, neighborhood, work, peace, and freedom"—featured prominently aspects of the ideal. And several key elements of Reagan's first term—including his "New Federalism" initiative, the private sector initiatives task force, the block grants component of the 1981 tax and spending package, and efforts to return to states and localities jurisdiction over certain critical moral questions such as prayer in school and abortion—reflected an allegiance to the idea of the small republic. Reagan argued in 1981, for instance, that his administration's "emphasis on voluntarism, the mobilization of private groupings to deal with our social ills, is designed to foster . . . our sense of communal values." On another occasion, he noted that the "renaissance of the American community, a rebirth of neighborhood—that is the heart and soul of rebuilding America." Finally, Reagan returned to the small republican ideal in the 1984 campaign. The Republican platform for that campaign noted that "America was built on the institutions of home, family, religion and neighborhood," and it criticized the federal government for interfering with those institutions: "By centralizing responsibility for social programs in Washington, liberal experimentors destroyed the sense of community that sustains local institutions." The platform called for a renewed emphasis on voluntarism and decentralist federalism as means to reinvigorate local communities and associations, because "our roots in family, home, and neighborhood do not tie us down, they give us strength."

Reagan, then, seems to see America neither as a great national community, nor—Mondale to the contrary notwithstanding—as a disconnected collection of rugged (and mean-spirited) individualists. He seems to see America, rather, as a nation *of* communities, rooted in the small republican idea of intimate association in local communities, neighborhood, families, and ethnic and voluntary associations. As he formulated it on one occasion, he wants an America that is an "orderly, compassionate, pluralistic society—an archipelago of prospering communities and divergent institutions."

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Given these observations about Mondale and Reagan, it simply will not do to view the results of the 1984 election as the triumph of naked selfishness over community. Mondale chose—or was compelled by his allegiance to the progressive liberal tradition—to tie his campaign to an idea of community that had been in decline for a decade and a half. It had been in decline because it no longer answered the quest for community in a way that was satisfactory to most Americans. That had been the unmistakable message of developments, not only in the Republican party, but within Mondale's own party as well, on both left and right flanks, since 1968. Small wonder, then, that in the final analysis Mondale was perceived, not as the champion of a noble moral cause, but rather as an apologist for big government—a "Washington insider"—supported primarily by those "special interests" that had developed professional stakes in the large, bureaucratic state.

As the idea of national community had declined, Americans had begun to indicate that they now preferred to satisfy the quest for community in more traditional ways, through the small assemblages of family, neighborhood, church, and ethnic and voluntary associations. President Reagan, for most of his public life and certainly in 1984, had spoken precisely to this small republican sentiment. The American people simply could not be persuaded, therefore, that he was a mean-spirited Social Darwinist, a champion of unbridled self-interest. He seemed to remain for them, even after four years in office, a "Washington outsider," an opponent of centralized, bureaucratic government, a spokesman for the moral and religious values of the small town and neighborhood.

It may be (and often is) argued that Reagan has been no more successful in implementing the small republican vision than his predecessors. It can hardly be denied, however, that Reagan has persisted in his efforts to devolve government responsibility to the states, localities, and private sector in a way that Nixon, Ford, and Carter did not. Furthermore, Reagan now has a formidable weapon—deepening public concern over the federal deficit—that was not available to his predecessors, as they struggled to scale back the federal government. However the Reagan administration fares in practice, the point is that its enormous popularity among the American people in 1984 cannot be dismissed simply as a victory for economic self-interest. That popularity testifies, above all, to the continuing decline of the idea of national community, and the continuing vitality of the small republican renaissance that began in the 1960s.

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Between profession and vocation: the case of public health

STEPHEN WHITE

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS within colleges or universities, whether graduate or undergraduate, customarily bear names that say pretty well what they are about. There can be little doubt about what goes on, in general, within a school of law, or medicine, or business administration, and not really much ambiguity about what goes on in a school of education, although a stickler might make a case. The wares of the school of public health or its alternative, the department of public health within a medical school, are not made manifest in its name; they have changed in fits and starts over the years in response to external events; they require discourse.

Historically, medical care, where it existed, was almost entirely a transaction between physician and patient. Elements of what might be called organized attention to the health of a community were certainly to be found. The Romans drained the swamps, largely in the belief that the "miasma" they generated was the cause of ill health; that in doing so they were also ridding the vicinity of mosquitos was considered no more than a fringe benefit. In the late eighteenth century Jenner, noticing that milk maids were less likely to suffer from small pox than their neighbors, found the way to inoculation against

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that disease; in the nineteenth century Pasteur was able to counter the damage done by a bite from a rabid dog; in this country Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. waged a battle to persuade obstetricians to wash their hands before entering the delivery room. All these continued, however, to be resources to be used within the doctor-patient relationship.

That relationship had also been the dominant resource in the battle against recurrent epidemics. Here, however, community action was also present in requirements for quarantine and immediate interment of the dead. It was noted also that leaving the immediate vicinity of the epidemic was a sound move; thus, the story goes, did Isaac Newton achieve the leisure to discover the universal law of gravitation.

The demonstrations by Pasteur and others of the relationship between disease and the bacterial infestation of milk and water were of another sort entirely. In those instances, and particularly in the instance of the urban water supply and sewage treatment, the remedy clearly lay in the area of community action backed by the force of law wherever that was necessary.

The appearance of a new word is not without significance. As the Oxford English Dictionary reports it, the word "epidemiology" occurs first in the title of a publication dated 1873: "Epidemiology, or the Remoter Causes of Diseases." That phrasing implied a body of firm knowledge, in being or in prospect. At about the same time an eminent Victorian physician, John Tyndall, laid out the outlines of that knowledge that would be required: "Reproductive parasitic life is at the root of all epidemic disease." That was prescriptive: It implied an organized search for the responsible parasite and the development of means to destroy it, or interfere with its reproductive processes, or prevent it from infecting the human subject. And all that in turn implied an intensive educational process which would produce the specialists who were to undertake those tasks; common sense would not be sufficient.

Much of what Tyndall proposed lay in the area of conventional medical practice, but much did not. Typhoid could be treated, although with indifferent success, by the medical practitioner; preventing its occurrence, however, was more likely to be the task of the engineer. Epidemiology and the ability to squeeze knowledge out of an array of statistical data were at once recognizable as matter for a new medical profession; the ability of the engineer to implement the consequences of that new knowledge became of great medical significance.

There had been since the earliest days of the nation a certain attention to general health practices, represented first by a "Marine Hospital Service" intended to oversee the conduct of trade and the health of men at sea and in the armed services. That, in a sense, was the begin-

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ning of the field of public health in this country (and in Great Britain as well). In modern terms, however, it was this conjunction of scientific knowledge and engineering skills that created a serious governmental role, embodied in 1912 in the United States Public Health Service under the Surgeon General, and charged with responsibility for such matters as hygiene, water pollution, and sanitation.

Creating the school of public health

That chain of events brought epidemiology into the medical school early on; there were offerings in preventive medicine to be found, and professors of epidemiology as well, in addition to scattered attempts in various medical schools to provide a professional education in public health. The Harvard Medical School, in 1909, enjoyed the first full-time Professor of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, and shortly thereafter founded the first Department of Preventive Medicine in an American medical school; in 1913 Milton Joseph Rosenau was one of those who created the Harvard-M.I.T. School for Health Officers. On that basis Harvard lays claim to the honor of having created the first graduate school of public health in the United States. But that school was not an institution in its own right but an ad hoc assemblage of professorial skills in two separate institutions, and Johns Hopkins contests the claim; its own School of Hygiene and Public Health can fairly be said to be the first free-standing school of public health in the United States, and from 1916 to 1922 the only such school. The name is sufficient to indicate the nature of the offerings.

At Johns Hopkins, the scientific aspects of the task were served in the training of its students in those aspects of epidemiology that were not historically a part of ordinary medical training. Thus began the tradition of hostility between medical schools and schools of public health, in part because they were competing for some of the same resources, but also—and worse—because both institutions were erected on the presumption that the public health was in their keeping. Much has changed since then, but the hostility persists.

The matriculants in those early days at both Harvard and Johns Hopkins were almost exclusively graduates of a medical school or (since this was a period in which doctors still practiced after an apprenticeship alone) those who were held qualified to practice medicine.

As for the engineering component, it was construed, quite naturally, to be no different in kind from naval or electrical engineering; it was denominated sanitary engineering. As a task for the educator, it simply took its place in the engineering school. Paying for the services

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and the products of the sanitary engineer was another matter. Even in an era in which big government was not generally held in high regard, this was clearly no task for private enterprise, and public health became once and for all a governmental function, although almost entirely at the state and local levels.

As a practical matter, the curriculum and general approach that Johns Hopkins institutionalized in its School of Hygiene and Public Health filtered into the better medical schools in the form of course offerings. By the end of World War I, curricula broadly recognizable to be dealing with public health were being offered in one form or another in perhaps 20 institutions, of which only Johns Hopkins had seen fit to break the matter off from the medical school.

Much of this stemmed from an initiative taken by the Rockefeller Foundation through its influential General Education Board, which convened a small commission in 1914 to consider the issue of professional education for those who were to be charged with responsibility for the public health. That commission produced its report in 1916, calling for the creation of Institutions of Public Health. These were to be conducted under the highest of standards, closely affiliated with a university and its medical school, but organized as entities in their own right, with an institute of hygiene as their base.

The task of formulating a plan for such schools was assigned to William Welch and Wickliffe Rose, who presented their own report in 1916. It outlined an Institute of Hygiene to train physicians and a few others "who expect to devote their lives to health work," including administrative officials, health officers, higher technical experts such as statisticians, sanitary engineers, chemists, bacteriologists and epidemiologists, as well as inspectors and nurses.

But beyond that, much of which might have been expected, Welch and Rose demonstrated a remarkable ability to anticipate a future that was still quite distant. "When one considers," they wrote, "the many points of contact between the modern social welfare movement and the public health movement, and to what extent social and economic factors enter into questions of public health, it is clear that an institute of hygiene must take full cognizance of such factors and that students of social science should profit by certain opportunities in the Institute, as well as students of hygiene by training in social science and social work."

In a sense, Welch and Rose were merging the public health movement with the settlement house movement. A little more attention to the behavioral sciences as a whole would have made their plan and the accompanying exhortation, references to sanitary engineers aside,

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very much a model for almost all the existing graduate schools of public health.

Its immediate effects were more limited. They were greatly stimulated by the generosity of one Joseph DeLamar, who provided endowments of approximately $1 million each to Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and Columbia, to be employed in the support of graduate programs in public health. Harvard responded by institutionalizing its efforts in a School of Public Health as part of its medical school, and Columbia created a similar school. At much the same time, without the benefit of DeLamar's assistance, Yale University also instituted such a school. Thus by the early 1920s there were four such schools in all, in four of the most eminent educational institutions to be found in the United States—all private, all on the East Coast, concentrating their efforts on the relevant sciences and their application to public health.

The old plagues are conquered

In the years that followed, epidemiology broadened enormously in scope, to the point where Sinclair Lewis, with the considerable help of Paul de Kruif, saw fit to write a somewhat romantic novel dealing with exactly that. (No school of public health figures in *Arrowsmith*.) There was a considerable broadening of acquaintance with viral diseases and the manners in which the virus reached its target.

An increased familiarity with the bacillus made it possible to provide protection of one kind or another against such diseases as diphtheria and tetanus. The role of public health was considerably broadened, although in most instances it was still the physician and not the institutions of public health which played the major role. Essentially, the outbreak of infectious disease in any locality created a demand for immunization which the physician satisfied; much the same kind of process led to a demand for immunization from those traveling to areas where such diseases as smallpox or yellow fever were prevalent and ultimately to legislation which made such immunizations prerequisite to issuance of a passport. Childhood diseases also came to the attention of school boards and local legislators. The schoolroom was recognized as the focus from which infection was spread (just as today it is the focus from which drug addiction is spread) and spawned regulations and legislation that made immunization a requirement at the time of entry into the school system.

Legislators thus found themselves considering matters of public health from time to time, and became aware that schools of public health, where they existed, were providing important epidemiological knowledge and practice. The roster of these schools grew modestly,

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and Departments of Epidemiology here and there became Departments of Public Health or of Epidemiology and Public Health. The schools, as distinct from departments, were the less numerous.

Up to the end of World War II, eight additional schools of public health came into being at the Universities of Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, California at Berkeley, California at Los Angeles, Puerto Rico and Pittsburgh, and Tulane University. Six of the eight were public; a seventh, the University of Pittsburgh, now calls itself "state-related"; only Tulane now calls itself "private." Only North Carolina could be said to be on the East Coast (the first four were very firmly so).

As might have been expected, the schools entering the system were much more responsive to needs perceived by state legislatures and urban governments. Those needs were particularly evident in areas of health administration and health management as state and city health departments, once little more than record-keeping agencies, found themselves with greater obligations and discovered greater opportunities. Those with degrees in medicine no longer predominated in those schools; nursing degrees and experience in social work were qualification enough, and in some instances state legislatures specified that a substantial portion of matriculants come from those fields.

Meanwhile, a good deal was going on in laboratories, predominantly in schools of medicine and in the hard sciences. Familiarity with the virus and its habits was growing in great leaps, and with that familiarity came the possibility of control. The work of Muller and Enders in particular made it possible to employ firm knowledge where Jenner was obliged to rely on shrewdness and his powers of observation. The first great outcome was the Salk and Sabin vaccines, which promised to eliminate poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis). No disease was at once so prevalent and so heartbreaking; no cure received such widespread publicity; no event brought issues of public health so sharply to the general attention.

On another front, Fleming's powers of observation led to the development of first penicillin and thereafter a battery of antibiotics. Infectious diseases which had been lethal in the late 1930s were being casually cured in the mid-1940s by a few stabs of the needle or a small handful of pills.

The consequence of all this can be seen in the statistics, and they are no less than staggering. In 1900 mortality from pneumonia and influenza stood at 202.2 per 100,000; by 1976 it was 28.8. Deaths from diphtheria were so rare as to be as close to nonexistent; poliomyelitis was rare; deaths from diarrhea and other gastro-intestinal diseases had

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all but vanished. The power of the practicing physician had been augmented beyond any bounds which might have been conceived a generation earlier. In this neither the departments of epidemiology nor most existing institutions of public health had played any major role. Yet the effect on those institutions was profound. It changed them suddenly and radically; it continues to change them still.

And new plagues expand

Despite all those triumphs, people continued to die before their time, which was something of an affront to the medical profession. As deaths from tuberculosis, diphtheria, and gastro-intestinal diseases diminished, heart diseases, cancer, and stroke took their places at the top of the list. Between 1900 and 1930, life expectancy increased from 41 years to 70 years, but there it stabilized, or appeared at least to be very close to its limit in the United States; although a few European countries were doing better.

At the same time, science marched inexorably forward. In particular, the years after World War II saw enormous advances in fields of pure and applied science of considerable significance to medical research and medical practice.

As a matter of course, there were advances in biology and biochemistry and biophysics which came about as a consequence of the pure drive for knowledge. And at the same time, out of basic physics there came a stream of sophisticated scientific instruments, a good many of which were invaluable to those who were engaged in medical diagnosis. Quantum physics, the very frontier of science, first produced a weapon of incredible power and then the transistor, the laser, the CAT scanner, even the positron tomograph. Advances in discrete mathematics and the power of the computer to suck knowledge out of arrays of statistical data had their own immediate effect, reflected first in the sudden development of the polling industry but far more significantly in the burgeoning of biostatistics, which had always been a most important tool for the epidemiologist.

It had not required sophisticated biostatistics to reveal the alarming increase in lung cancer that had been occurring over the previous decades. Cancer, moreover, whatever its nature, was for one reason or another one of the most terrifying of all the causes of death. The state of affairs was one that lent itself to the methods of epidemiology, and to call it an "epidemic" was in the good tradition of the metaphorical use of the term. The biostatisticians bent to, and in a short time were producing extremely persuasive evidence that the cigarette habit was a good part of the reason. That was bad news indeed for the medical

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man, for advances in the cure of cancer were coming pitifully slowly. The only recourse available, for a good long while, was likely to come from successes in breaking the habit.

A second post-war phenomenon was the growth of serious concern over nuclear weapons testing. Here too the terrifying threat of cancer underlay much of the concern, and that made that particular form of pollution far more disturbing than the more familiar forms with which the sanitary engineer had managed for the most part to cope. Beyond that, the specter was raised of similar consequences from forms of pollution less exotic than nuclear fission and fusion, and research was conducted, quite often successfully, that demonstrated such effects in laboratory animals and occasionally beyond.

This concerns should not have been unexpected. The Manhattan Project called attention, in as startling a manner as one could imagine, to the fact that the world was entering an era of high technology, and it was only reasonable to suspect that a change of that magnitude would have a good many effects that were not entirely anticipated. Man was altering in a most unexpected fashion the place of his abode, and not all the changes would necessarily be benign.

The differences between those two kinds of threat turned out to be a good deal less important than the similarities of their effects. To begin with, both were the consequences of human behavior and would be diminished or removed (for the time being, at least) only if human behavior could be altered—the behavior of individuals in one instance and of institutions in the other—or if the rules of the game were to be changed. Prohibition comes to mind at once where cigarettes were concerned, but there was no taste for another fling at prohibition. Nuclear testing and other forms of pollution were more complicated matters, but it appeared clear that they would be halted, at least in their more threatening forms, only by the force of public opinion.

There was a general conviction that the menaces would not be seriously diminished by ordinary medical practice. The old dilemma thus appeared in a more powerful form: Who would pay for whatever needed doing? Not the individual, to be sure. That left philanthropy, which did not have the means, and the government, which also lacked the means but could get them. It should be added that the entry of the federal government, which had most of those means, into matters of health had also been stimulated by the earlier successes in the treatment of disease and the consequent conviction that those most likely to be affected, the elderly, should by right have access to medical care. Taken together, all this justified the entry of the federal government into matters of public health on a scale that could not

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have been imagined a decade earlier. And once that entry was made, it was inevitable that the scale could only grow, and grow quickly. Health care, after all, constitutes what economists call "an infinite sink." Who is to deny a dying man a few weeks or months of life if a complete set of transplanted internal organs can be provided for a mere few million dollars?

Those developments in effect redefined the meaning of the phrase "the public health." As a practical matter, the public health constituted one area of activity of the federal government, and a monstrously large area into the bargain. Included in the tally were Medicare and Medicaid; the various institutes established by the government or extensively expanded, such as the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the bureaucracy set in place first by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and subsequently, as the bills mounted, the Department of Health and Human Services. The Environmental Protection Agency dealt widely in public health, as did the agency dealing with occupational safety and health and, of course, the behemoth itself, the Department of Defense and its own outlying agencies. The list could be extended to become a catalog.

The effect of all this on the enterprise which might broadly be called "professional education for activities in the realm of public health" was broad and in some of its aspects somewhat unexpected. "Public health" had begun pretty much as epidemiology, based on the natural sciences, both pure and applied. But if much that ailed the American public was to be obviated, it was the behavioral sciences that would take center stage for the time being at least, since the matter at issue was the alteration of behavior.

Then, too, since the government was in one way or another paying a large part of the costs of hospital care, the training of hospital managers appeared to fall naturally within the domain of public health. So, too, did the analysis and formation of "health policy"—no simple matter because that policy, or those policies, constituted an annual shopping list that totted up to 12 digits straining toward 13. Finally, the eleemosynary instincts that run so deep in those spending the money of others called for an extensive activity in "international health" which, to be quite fair about it, is something of an obligation upon the world's richest nation.

Adapting to the new age

For the older schools of public health, the adjustment to the new order of things was not always easy. The Harvard school had become free-standing after World War II; its faculty was largely tenured, and

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was not disposed to see the school move too deeply into new fields. By 1972 the president of the university, Derek Bok, had become dissatisfied with the performance of the school and its lack of responsiveness to what he considered to be most pressing public health needs of the times. He gave some consideration to abandoning the school, but in the end resolved to bring a new broom into play, and did so with the appointment of Dr. Howard Hiatt as dean.

Hiatt was a member of the faculty of the Medical School and Physician-in-Chief at one of the many Boston hospitals affiliated with Harvard. He had no particular background in public health, but he was a socially conscious man, and welcomed the challenge. He moved slowly, but within a few years the faculty in place became more and more resistant to the changes he wished to initiate. In 1978 a group numbering approximately half the tenured faculty asked Bok that Hiatt be dismissed; he was then beginning his second term as dean. Their charge was essentially that Hiatt had no respect for the traditional activities of the school, was providing little support for them, and was promoting what they considered to be a curriculum of soft social sciences and unconsidered health policy.

Bok stood fast, and confirmed a continuing support of Hiatt; indeed a few years later he reappointed Hiatt to a somewhat uncommon third five-year term as dean. Hiatt, or Bok, or both, must have found some of the complaints reasonable or perhaps were willing to placate the dissatisfied, for the pace of change slowed and few chose to resign. Hiatt, for his part, brought in some remarkably strong faculty within the traditional areas of public health, as he had intended to do once the ground had been cleared. When he himself chose to resign as dean, in 1984, the school had changed enormously, but the new dean, Harvey Fineberg, who had worked closely with Hiatt during the years of transition, took over a school that had moved into the new world of public health and was making distinguished contributions.

Some of the same strains existed in other established schools, although they did not become as publicly evident as in Cambridge. But the changes were made where change was called for and in addition new schools of public health came into being as a response to the demand. At present there are 23 such graduate schools, all properly accredited, of which seven are private institutions and the rest state universities or "state-affiliated." The curricula are pretty much alike, although they vary in detail: They include to begin with the study of epidemiology and of biostatistics. Another substantial portion of the curriculum derives, in principle at least, from the behavioral sciences; much of it is called health education. (Health education is clearly

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distinct enough from the hard sciences and their application to have generated a quite new field of professional education, which generally bears the words "community health" in its title; 11 such schools have been accredited.) Health policy is part of the curriculum of most schools, and various degrees of attention are paid to "international health" in most.

Seventeen of those schools have existed since 1965 and can provide data on enrollment between 1965 and 1982. During those years their new enrollments moved up from 1,797 to 2,852; in 1980, when enrollments more or less stabilized, some 8,200 students were being educated in 22 schools. The estimates in 1982 counted 9,000 students and 1,700 faculty.

The largest of these schools is also the oldest and one of the most highly respected: Johns Hopkins with 856 students. Next is nominally Loma Linda in California, hardly a household word until Baby Fae lived briefly with a transplanted baboon's heart in its School of Medicine late in 1984. The Loma Linda University School of Public Health counted more than 700 students at that time, but all but a few hundred attended off-campus. The second largest campus attendance was recorded at the University of North Carolina, with 637 students; Columbia University and the University of California—Los Angeles reported 538 and 530 respectively. San Diego State University, newly accredited in the field, was smallest with about 100; the University of Alabama had 126 and the University of South Carolina 192. Boston University, Berkeley, Harvard, the University of Hawaii, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Puerto Rico, the University of Texas, Tulane, the University of Washington, and Yale complete the list.

What does a graduate know, and do?

At present approximately 500,000 men and women are employed in the provision of public health services of one kind or another, about one half of whom are deemed to be fully employed in such a fashion. No more than 25,000, or 10 percent of the latter group, hold any kind of advanced degrees in public health. The class of 1981 in toto reported three years out that of those holding degrees, preponderantly Masters of Public Health, 40 percent were in administration, planning or evaluation; 34.3 percent in "technical services," dealing largely with social and environmental affairs; 14 percent in schools of the sort

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from which they were graduated; 6.7 percent were providing community organizational services; and 4.7 percent were consultants.

Epidemiologists numbered less than 2 percent, despite the fact that it is widely agreed, and reported by such institutions as the Centers for Disease Control, that there is a distinct shortage of epidemiologists and biostatisticians. The schools have moved far from their heritage.

The report of the Class of 1981 is broadly representative of the areas in which current students chose to specialize during their years in graduate school, although it does not conform closely with the choices they subsequently appear to make. Administration leads with 24 percent; Environment next with 12.8 percent followed by Epidemiology with 12.2 percent. Biostatistics is low in the race with 6.4 percent after health education and other fields of concentration.

Courses (as titled in course catalogues) and the distribution of faculty arouse suspicions that much which is offered comes perilously close to gossip. The area of the behavioral sciences for the 23 schools as a whole is served by 119 sociologists and 89 psychologists; courses bear such titles as "Sex Roles," "Substance Abuse," "Social Change," "Community Organization," "Group Dynamics," and "The Social and Economic Aspects of Fertility." To be sure, such courses and others of the kind can be taught quite as respectably as anything the law school or the medical school can offer, but one would need to be convinced.

All those accredited schools fall under the aegis of the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), created after the war. The ASPH has its headquarters in the District of Columbia, 40 miles from the nearest school of public health in Baltimore; it was brought into being for lobbying purposes, although in the hands of Michael Gemmell, its executive director, it is moving steadily into more recognizable academic activities.

Accreditation is governed by the Council on Education for Public Health, created for that purpose by the Association. The criteria for accreditation, as of 1984, define "the areas of knowledge basic to public health" to include: (1) biological, physical, and chemical factors which affect the health of a community; (2) concepts and measures which affect the health of a community; (3) distribution of diseases or conditions in populations and factors that influence this distribution; and (4) planning, policy analysis, and administration of health programs. It is hardly an understatement to say that this is a broad mandate.

The report of a Milbank Memorial Fund Commission, chaired by Cecil G. Sheps, then Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences at the University of North Carolina, set no less ambitious an agenda, asserting

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that "in its broadest sense, public health is legitimately concerned with the quality of life .... Social measures such as those which attempt to provide adequate income, housing and recreation facilities, healthy working conditions... contribute substantially." Few government functions are ignored. The commission at that point was dealing with public health rather than with professional education for public health service; when it did deal with such education it was considerably more restrictive in its charge on the schools.

A university can house, in some broad sense, all the disciplines relevant to so broad a charge; to do so it creates schools and departments. It is most difficult to conceive of a structure in which a single school would at once be responsible for all. The Milbank report asserted as much in proposing that the schools of public health limit themselves to what it called generic knowledge; epidemiology, biostatistics, social policy, the philosophy and history of public health, management and health economics, leaving a good deal to the rest of the university. The counsel was not followed, for the most part.

Who goes to a public health school?

Certainly from a certain point of view the schools of public health can be seen as somewhat disjointed affairs, valorously attempting to cover almost the entire range of human knowledge as well as a large portion of organized human guesswork, housing students who may be pursuing any one of a wide variety of curricular tracks as they may wish to become bio-statisticians or family planners. Indeed, in a good many of the lesser schools just that is likely to be exactly the case. And it should be noted that the academic quality of schools of public health varies no less than the academic quality of undergraduate colleges. They are by no means all of a piece.

But here, too, Welch and Rose showed considerable prescience back in 1916. "Unity," they wrote, "is to be found rather in the ends to be accomplished—the preservation and improvement of health—than in the means essential to that end." A long while earlier Francis Bacon announced "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," but knowledge was in somewhat shorter supply in his century, and his aspirations were somewhat lower than those of the schools of public health. Their unity comes not from the common struggle to master the means but from a faith in the ends. They are likely to be closer in spirit to schools of divinity than to the medical school next door.

That state of affairs is most notable in the nature of the student body. Leaving aside those who enter graduate schools because it is somehow expected of them, most of those who choose to continue their

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formal education past college do so because they seek higher status, or higher income, or both. There is nothing ignoble in either search: Striving to gain respect is laudable in itself, and Samuel Johnson once pointed out that "a man is never more innocently employed than when he is getting money."

The motivation of a considerable portion of those who attend the schools of public health is quite otherwise. They will gain little status from their post-graduate education. Indeed those who have M.D. degrees when they enter—and although their numbers have diminished considerably as public health has evolved they are still to be found—will lose status among their peers. Material rewards are close to nonexistent; one dean has pointed out, somewhat hyperbolically, that he presides over the only professional school from which the graduate emerges with less earning power than he possessed when he entered. The mean income of Masters of Public Health three years out of graduate school, as reported in 1984 by the ASPH, was $24,500, with half the graduates earning less than $22,000. In those terms, the foregone income of the M.P.H. who also owns an M.D. is likely to be somewhat staggering.

The motivation of many is that of the reformer, the zealot, the do-gooder. The students are moved by the urge to make the American public healthy, whether that public wishes to be healthy or not. They are much of the temper of those who rushed to enter the Peace Corps a generation back, imbued in large part with an urge to remake the whole world into what they conceived to be the image of America. (There was also a search for adventure and travel involved, which is not normally a major stimulus among present-day students of public health.)

Zealotry, however well-intentioned, can beget arrogance. "A fanatic," said Mr. Dooley as reported by Finley Peter Dunne, "is a man that does what he thinks the Lord wud do if he knew the facts iv the case." "Fanatic" is not too strong a word to employ in describing some of those in the field of public health. It must also be questioned whether the reformer's zeal creates the best of atmospheres within a professional school. It can be asserted confidently that such an atmosphere, with its tendencies toward the *a priori* is not one in which science, whether natural or behavioral, is furthered or is effectively applied.

None of this should be taken to suggest that the schools of public health house none but zealots. Matriculants who come to the schools after accumulating work experience within public health services or in social services do so because they believe, quite justifiably, that an

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advanced degree will enable them to return to greater responsibilities and higher pay. But the zealots are to be found within the schools; they are likely to work hard cultivating zealotry in others, and by and large they are capable of setting the tone.

Finding a common thread

Atmosphere aside, there is much matter for concern in all but the very best of the schools. There is, to begin with, little of a common core underlying the curriculum and even a certain resistance to providing such a core. The student who intends to enter the field of hospital management is not likely to have any deep interest or any great skills in epidemiology or its underlying sciences; biostatistics does not lie within his spheres of interest. The M.D. with an intellectual interest in epidemiology is concerned with hospital management only to the degree that it hampers or furthers his own interest (and at the extreme to the degree that hospitals appear to be generating their own endemic diseases). There is little of the general collegial spirit which animates those in the law schools and the medical schools, despite the wide variety of specializations that may characterize their educational goals. Most of all, the tools of the health educator are largely exhortation and a messianic stance, which go ill with almost any other course of study.

Nor do the students have much in common. They are not likely to enter postgraduate education directly out of college; that is no longer uncommon over the whole range of professional schools. They are likely to have worked, during the interim, in fields broadly or intimately associated with health: as physicians or research scientists in some instances, but more frequently as social workers, nurses, or hospital employees. In all, they are far more heterogeneous than the students of most graduate schools.

The broad range of the curriculum calls for an equal breadth in those who teach it. Health policy, for example, calls for faculty members with a keen understanding of government and political science and economics; such people are far more at home, and hold far higher status, in their own departments within the graduate school of arts and sciences. Again, except at those few universities held in such high esteem that they appear attractive under any and all circumstances, and can pick and choose as a whole for faculty, the economist at a school of public health is most unlikely to be the pick of the litter.

With the same general exception, the graduates are not highly prized. The hospital seeking management skills will look first to the schools of business administration, such as Yale and Stanford, which

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provide a public management track, and even to those which do not. Graduate schools of public policy—themselves a product of the increased role of the federal government in all aspects of the society—necessarily concern themselves with health policy, and almost surely, other things being equal, deliver a more useful graduate than most of those coming from a school of public health.

Where the school of public health is more nearly unique is in its attention to health education. Yet no dean of whom inquiry was made expressed satisfaction with his program in health education. To be sure, during the past few decades America has generated what must be the most valetudinarian a society as the world has ever seen. Yet much of this valetudinarianism is faddish and some of its outcomes—jogging is an example—may in practice constitute a net decrease in public health. The search for an "organic" tomato is extremely expensive, and that employment of the word "organic" does damage to the English language that it has not deserved; in any event, it is difficult to believe that "health foods" of themselves have any effect on health at all. Low-cholesterol, low-salt, and low-sugar diets owe more to internists and advertising agencies than to the entire public health establishment.

The single significant alteration in health-related habits appears to be that associated with smoking. Again, the attack on cigarette smoking was initiated and conducted by physicians rather than by the public health establishment. To the extent that public health became engaged, its role has lain for the most part not in persuading smokers to desist but in persuading nonsmokers to harass them. Since we are still a genteel society there is a certain reluctance to harass women, and especially young women; as a consequence cancer of the lung threatens to become more prevalent among women than among men.

The sense of mission keeps morale high despite a dissatisfaction among students with the education that the schools provide, at least as represented by two recent studies of the matter. The studies appear to show little accord between what the faculty wishes to provide and what the students wish to receive. Thus in one study, at the University of Texas, faculty members assigned high importance to courses in cost-benefit analysis and computing; students perceived them to be of little or no value. At Tulane, the faculty was only mildly interested in administration or social policy; students wanted a great deal more of both.

A profession or a vocation?

Whether the schools of public health are to be looked upon as "professional" schools is a matter of definition and hence to some de-

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gree a matter of taste. Very nearly anything can be called professional. In one sense the word is applied to those who perform primarily or exclusively for pay, which certainly does not characterize the graduates of the school of public health.

In a more exalted sense in which the schools of law and medicine are taken to exemplify the professional school at its best, the schools themselves have some power of admission into professional practice, either *de jure* or *de facto*. They are expected further to imbue within their students a respect for some kind of professional code, and penalties of one sort or another can be imposed if the code is breached. Their faculties, or a sizable portion of them, generate new professional knowledge. The relationship between their graduates and the clients with whom they deal is one in which to a very large extent it is the professional who governs.

Most of those criteria are not met by the school of public health. The figures indicate quite unambiguously that it has no power of certification of any kind; only a small minority of those who work in the various fields of public health hold advanced degrees in public health. No professional code is enunciated, except perhaps in the most general terms. The client, for the most part, is government at one level or the other, and it should not be at all surprising that it is generally the government that governs. There is research, however, at virtually all the schools of public health, and if the quality of that research varies widely from school to school, no more can be said of the law and medicine.

But it is questionable whether the schools of law and medicine can be taken to define "professional school." Certainly "business administration" can be substituted for "public health" in the foregoing paragraph. Schools of education do not meet all the criteria; schools of mass communication, closely regarded, meet none.

Nor do the schools of public health enjoy the same quasi-monopoly that characterizes most professional schools. The American Public Health Association estimated in 1981 that graduate degree programs are offered by at least 50 institutions in health services and hospital administration, 36 in environmental health, approximately 100 in public and community health education, and eight in public health nutrition. In addition, students are enrolled in epidemiology and biostatistics, the heart of the public health curriculum, outside its schools.

It may be that the judgment must be made on more general grounds. Over the years the schools of public health have responded to public health needs which they themselves did little to identify, and have employed academic tools which they themselves did little to gen-

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erate. It can assuredly be said about the run-of-the-mill school—and it is from such schools that the bulk of Masters of Public Health emerge—that morale is high. Much the same, presumably, can be said of schools of divinity. A certain exhilaration proceeds from the conviction that one is doing the Lord's work.

Beyond that, in terms of the usual criteria set for professional schools, the schools of public health cannot for the most part rank high—somewhere in the neighborhood of schools of mass communication and schools of education—although there are certainly exceptions. It seems far more reasonable to look upon public health as a vocation, in the root meaning of the word, and its schools almost without exception are to be judged as vocational schools. But the vocation itself is anything but ignoble, and the students leave the schools with high purposes and a dedication to their accomplishment. For those who are themselves wedded to those purposes, the schools are worthy institutions. For others not so inspired, it would appear that they could use improvement. In either case, there should be no disposition either to look upon them as devoid of major utility, or at the extreme as a blight, which might reasonably be said here and there of other academic institutions.

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Educating architects: pedagogy and the pendulum

ROBERT GUTMAN

THERE ARE NOW 94 schools and departments of architecture in the United States that offer programs to prepare students for entry into the profession. They range in size from Cooper Union and Princeton with 75 to 150 students to the state polytechnic universities in California which enroll 1,000 or more. About 35,000 students are now enrolled in the accredited departments and schools nationwide; half of them are in professional degree programs, and half are acquiring a general education with a special emphasis on architecture as a major subject. Students who graduate with professional degrees have fulfilled the formal educational requirements of the state boards that certify architects. After three years in an architect's office, they are eligible to take the certification examination. Many of the students who go through the schools but do not get a professional degree may do so later at the masters level, but the majority follow other careers in which they may use their architectural training, including fields ranging from real estate and construction to film making and the graphic arts. Of the 30–35,000 students who have been enrolled in the accredited schools on the average annually over the last five years, approximately 4,000

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have received professional degrees and 2,500 have gotten non-professional degrees annually. In 1981, 2,400 candidates passed the state certification examinations to become registered architects.

The number of students enrolled in professional degree programs has doubled over the last 20 years. Thus, it is not surprising that the number of licensed architects has increased by an even larger percentage. Roger Montgomery of Berkeley has argued that architecture is now the fastest-growing profession, outpacing even the lawyers. There are now some 70,000 licensed architects in the U.S. and another group of 30–40,000 people who the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics include among architects because they have design or technical jobs in architectural offices or have architectural training but are not certified. Some of this group are recent graduates who will be taking the state examinations in the next few years. More than the other major professions, architecture is a field in which people seem to be able to acquire clients and get work and yet be rather open about the fact that they are not licensed.

Morale is relatively high in the schools at the moment. It reflects the fact that the places available in the schools are filled, and that recent graduates have been getting jobs easily. Morale is also helped by the attention shown to architectural subjects recently by the general public. The public television networks have two series in preparation on architecture; metropolitan newspapers and the newsweeklies have added coverage of architecture in their cultural sections; many more big city art museums now include departments of architecture and design; there are commercial galleries which exhibit architectural drawings; and the publishing of architectural books has become a major enterprise, with many new presses specializing in the field as well as bookstores devoted to the subject. In many large cities and small towns the preservation of historic American buildings is often now the only evidence that the quality of the urban environment is still a political issue.

In saying that architecture students exhibit relatively high morale at the moment, however, it is important to stress the word *relatively*. Most architects and architectural educators, in my experience, are never really in good spirits or happy for very long. Indeed, even now when the profession is prospering, when there are no major unemployment problems facing architects, when construction volume—to which job opportunities are tied closely—is high, and when the nation is suddenly fascinated by architectural production, we still can pick up at random an issue of any professional monthly magazine and read an article or a letter wondering whether the profession will survive.

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Four characteristics of the field are responsible for the architect's perennial disgruntlement. First, despite public interest in their field and the apparently expanding market for their services, architects are still poorly paid compared to other professions with comparable status and an ancient and noble lineage, such as law and medicine. In New York City in 1981, according to a survey of that year by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the starting salary of young professionals ranged from $10–14,000 annually, with the higher salary going to the men and women employed in the larger offices—this at a time when graduates of the top law schools working in Wall Street law firms were being offered starting salaries in the $30–40,000 range. These differences between architecture and other professions persist for all ranks and age levels, except perhaps for the leading partners of the very top architecture offices, where remuneration levels are comparable to law. Within the schools the situation is similar, since the architecture faculties are at the bottom end of the pay scale of university disciplines.

A second reason for unhappiness is that even the most successful architects do not enjoy the complete control over the design and building process to which they aspire. It is important to realize that the architects who are now defined as the best in the field are artists much more than they are experts in construction, in putting buildings together, or in accommodating the needs of users. Their ambition is to design everything from the general plan of the building right down to the furnishings, including the ashtrays in a museum, the desk of the board chairman in a headquarters building, even the tablecloths and cutlery for a private house. Of course, there are very few building projects in which such full control is allowed by clients, and architects are aware that the opportunity to fulfill this aspiration is rare. Nevertheless it persists as an understandable ideal and exacerbates the sense of frustration when more modest goals are thwarted by the client.

A third problem for architects is that they are always able to point to a large number of buildings that are designed without the use of their services, either by owner-users themselves for small projects such as houses, or by competing design professionals in larger buildings. Offices, apartment houses, galleries, and other modern building types are frequently designed by engineers and interior designers. Often architects find that clients insist on a particular specialist in these fields with whom the architect must collaborate. The architectural profession has been engaged in a century-long struggle to exclude other designers from these jobs through legislation that would limit the practice of building design tasks only to architects, but the campaign

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never achieved its goals. The title "architect" is protected but not the exclusive right to dominate the design field. The legal arrangements for qualifying architects that the profession likes to describe as *licensing* is in fact a system of *certification* (to use Milton Friedman's distinction between the different methods advocated by occupations for achieving a monopoly over services in their field of expertise). The prospects for expanding the arrangements for architectural certification into a licensing system have become poorer in the last decade. On the contrary, the major reform efforts have been led by the clients who, in California and other states, have been attempting to substitute a system of *registration* for the certification system. Under registration, anyone who chooses to engage in design work is free to do so, providing his name is listed with the appropriate state agency.

Despite the architects' failure to institute licensing, the profession's share of the building design market continues to increase. For example, in the housing industry, which according to the lore of the profession has been especially notorious for not employing architects, the use of architects' services has doubled in the last 40 years, so that now about half of all housing units are designed with input from architects. Admittedly, in the case of mass housing, architects do not have anywhere near the degree of control over the total product that they would prefer; nevertheless, they do make some contribution to the final design, and housing has become an important source of the profession's income. It is trends like these in the housing industry that help to explain the rapid increase in the number of architects since World War II. In the face of these signs of accelerating recognition of the profession's competence, observation by architects of the many buildings under construction which they cannot affect at all may be all the more irritating.

A fourth source of continuing disappointment for many architects stems, oddly enough, from the current popularity of the field. Many architects are suspicious about what the attention architecture now receives really means, and see in it evidence that the interest of the public in their profession is only skin deep. The phrase is meant literally; in many recent and much-publicized building projects, an architect was hired to design the facade that wraps around the building, perhaps also to design the lobby areas—in the case of office buildings—and sometimes to decorate some of the interior surfaces. Meanwhile, the structure of the building, heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, the materials used, and the planning of interior space were all done by other professional firms. In fact, of course, this division of labor has been progressing for a century or more in response

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to the increasing scale of projects and also to development of more complex technologies that clients demand. But the use of celebrity architects to design only those features of the building that are more likely to be seen and visited by the public, and which therefore can help to create a favorable "image" of the client's enterprise, does seem to happen more often now than in earlier periods of American architecture. Indeed, there are relatively few building types still being constructed in which the architect who is named as the principal designer has much responsibility for making decisions about the issues relating to how the building is put together and how it is used.

Some educators worry not only that these trends will continue in practice, but also that the attitude from which the public and many clients have been approaching architecture will encourage students to regard courses and school projects about pragmatic issues as dispensable features of a program in architecture. As a result, there is a fear among faculty members who emphasize the importance of training for professional roles that students will not take seriously assignments about structure, user requirements, space planning, programming, and environmental control systems. In some schools, it is obvious from the work that students submit for their thesis projects that this is a well-grounded fear.

Underlying the recurrent displeasure, anxiety, irritation, sometimes even despair, which architects exhibit about the state of their profession, is a condition having to do with the nature of architecture itself: It is an art which only can exist in the form of an artifact that is both available to the public and useful. This combination of attributes imposes professional demands that are extremely difficult to satisfy equally well, particularly in every building that an architect designs. When a strategy for resolving these demands is made into a set of principles, and when, further, instruction in these principles becomes the obligation of an institution set in a university, the educational debate can become exceedingly complicated and factionalized. In this article, I will be discussing four issues around which the debate has focused. Since these issues have their genesis in the nature of architecture as a field of study and practice, it is hardly surprising that they are old problems. Many of them confronted architectural educators in the previous century, beginning with the decade after the Civil War, when the first three American schools were established at M.I.T., Illinois, and Cornell.

A shift toward design

As a result of advances in structural engineering and the growth of the building industry, the principal role of the architect since the end

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of the nineteenth century has been to design buildings, not to figure out how they should be fabricated, and not to engage personally in the job of constructing them. However, perhaps just because these other tasks have been played down as the job of the architect, the profession has faced the question how the design function can be integrated with the other skills required for building. These other skills include, in addition to the act of construction itself, the development and articulation of the program, the coordination of the design with code requirements and structural engineering constraints, and the supervision of the contractor to make certain that the completed building matches the design. Thus the issue for educators is how to emphasize design and still make certain that students will appreciate and use pragmatic skills in their projects.

The question reverses the issue which concerned the earliest architectural curricula in the U.S. Then the emphasis was on the role of the architect in building construction. Students were expected to concentrate on learning how to make working drawings, write specifications, and put buildings together. In the University of Illinois program, set up in 1873, for example, design was a subject studied intensively only during the last year of a three-year program. Gradually the emphasis on design became primary, but only when, around the turn of the century, several schools appointed French masters who had received diplomas from the Ecole des Beaux Arts, or selected American teachers who had received some of their own architectural education in Paris.

The move toward design as the core of architectural education is perhaps best symbolized by the development of separate programs in architectural engineering, to cater to those students whose principal ambition was to concentrate on construction. The first separate program was set up at Illinois in 1895. A further stage of this history includes the gradual disappearance in most schools of special departments of architectural engineering. Now structural engineering is taught to architects either by engineering faculty whose appointments are integrated into the architecture departments or by faculty borrowed or on joint appointments with schools of engineering.

The growing emphasis on architectural design matches developments in the practice of architecture. Although it makes sense that this should occur, the adversary relations between the schools and the profession has sometimes obscured this fact. The important change in practice is that office organization now corresponds to the complexity of building tasks. Architecture school graduates deal with overall building design, prepare working drawings, and specify design details, while engineering problems are farmed out to consultants or

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dealt with in-house by staff with engineering degrees. Construction review and the management of the building process also are dealt with by specialist consulting firms that are subsidiaries of large architectural practices or construction companies. The people who fill these jobs are often graduates of programs in construction management that are offered in some of the larger architecture schools, especially in state universities. Of course, it is expected or hoped that specialists of each type will be sensitive to the problems confronted by their colleagues and will also understand their way of approaching building problems. It is assumed in many departments of architecture that design students can acquire this sensitivity just by taking lecture courses in the allied subjects without actually having to solve problems in the architectural studio that raise issues of building technique or job management. Presumably, similar beliefs are held by departments that train engineers, construction managers, or environmental psychologists. For students in the latter programs who have backgrounds in architecture, the difficulty of various participants in the building process to appreciate the constraints which limit the understanding of allied disciplines is often mitigated.

How can one integrate the different specialties that are involved in professional work today? This is surely one of the most enduring issues of architectural education. The educators who believe that the faculty has minimal responsibility for integrating the specialities within the studio situation offer several different arguments in support of their view. One argument is that the student's schedule already is fully taken up by the task of learning to put forms together in a manner that one can begin to regard as architectural. Thus, it is simply not feasible to add to this requirement that the student also consider in detail the structural implications of his design. Of course, the standard rebuttal is that emphasizing design without considering practical constraints may lead to solutions that are unbuildable. This position then generates the counterargument that the typical studio critic has had a good deal of practical experience and is unlikely to allow a student to produce a building that ignores legal and technological constraints.

Another argument made by those who favor exclusive concentration on architectural issues *per se* is that schools have specialized and limited functions in the education of architects, as they do in other professions. This view implies that the education of the architect must be seen as extending over a much longer period than the time he is enrolled in an architecture school, and that even while in school, education occurs at many places outside the school itself. These other sites and periods include the experience a student might have before reach-

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ing architecture school, learning how to draw or working at a summer construction job or taking courses in drafting; the time spent during the summer doing the modern version of the Grand Tour, visiting architectural offices, or getting construction experience—and if not in the summer, or even if done during the summer, continued during the school year. Perhaps most important, the educational process should be seen to include the period after receipt of the professional degree when the student works for three years under the supervision of a more experienced architect in order to qualify for certification. All these experiences, it is argued, provide the student with a tremendous range of opportunities for integrating in a personal way all the skills required in professional work.

Still another argument put forth in support of the view that the schools should not worry about curriculum integration is that the collaborative nature of modern architectural practice compensates for the individual architect's specialized, limited knowledge. As an educational approach, the idea of the building team is usually traced to Walter Gropius. It is interesting to note that Gropius justified the approach as a countermeasure to the over-specialization that he discovered in American architectural education which, in his view, arose from the desire of large offices for a ready supply of young architects who knew one skill well and therefore would be easier to keep in isolated, subordinate positions. In emphasizing the idea of educating students while in school to participate in building teams, Gropius was trying to guard against the possibility that this hierarchical pattern of office work would become entrenched in the profession, as he emphasized in the following statement:

> For years I have been personally concerned, through my activities as an educator, with the plight of young architects as they leave school and enter into practice. I have seen them make valiant attempts to establish themselves independently, and I have seen them more often resign themselves to work indefinitely as draftsmen in large offices which offer little or no chance of exercising individual initiative. It is sad to see so much youthful energy and talent dry up by the slow attrition of our more and more centralized working system. Democratic concepts cannot easily survive the assaults of our increasing mechanization and superorganization, unless an antidote is used which may protect the individual in his struggle against the leveling effect of the mass mind.
>
> I have tried to find such an antidote by introducing my students in Harvard, besides their individual training, to the experience of working in teams. This has become a valuable stimulant to students as well as to teachers who were all equally unacquainted with the advantages and difficulties of collaborating in groups. Now they had to learn to collaborate without losing their identity. This is to me an urgent task lying

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before the new generation, not only in the field of architecture but in all our endeavors to create an integrated society.[1]

Gropius's belief in the importance of group work went beyond an interest in teaching architects to collaborate as a way of assuring that young graduates would maintain their professional vitality. He also hoped that reinforcing the idea that architectural production requires team effort would open the way for architects to accept the participation of non-professionals in the design process. Studio problems should, he said, "closely follow the actual practice of the architect-designer by introducing clients, contractors and authorities concerned." Behind both of these aims was his ambition to make the school situation resemble as closely as possible the conditions which architects would encounter in practice. As I understand it, Gropius was talking about what today would be called the integrated studio, a studio which includes engineers and other specialists who work along with the architects in the supervision of student work. The underlying rationale for this studio is that design students cannot on their own achieve the integrative capacity required for the production of a total building.

In the two decades following World War II, the integrated studio was a very popular experiment. It not only attempted to incorporate faculty from many disciplines but typically also included students from the programs in landscape architecture and city planning as well. The idea was to enable the schools to prepare graduates to work in the large-scale, comprehensive form of practice which had developed among the firms that were engaged in designing defense installations during World War II. Indeed, the concept of the integrated studio became the fundamental theme of the study directed by Robert L. Geddes and Bernard Spring, which was commissioned by the American Institute of Architects in 1964 to consider the future of education in the profession. According to the text of their report:

> The study recommends three major goals that should set the pattern for the particular policies, strategies and operating procedures to be decided upon independently by the schools. The three goals are:
>
> 1. A student (or graduate) should be able to work effectively within the real world constraints that shape present day practice.
>
> 2. A student (or graduate) should be able to comprehend the continuing changes in the social, economic, political, scientific and technological setting of our society. He should be able to constantly renew and adapt his abilities in response to these changes.

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[1] Walter Gropius, *The Scope of Total Architecture*. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 77–78.

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3. A student (or graduate) should be able to formulate a concept of a better environment beyond present day constraints to give directions to his adaptability to change.[2]

The view that the schools should simulate practice is opposed to the belief described earlier that in the studio the schools should concentrate on the teaching of design to the exclusion of a focus on the pragmatic and policy issues of building. It seems, in other words, that the debate about the staffing of the studio is really also an argument about the best strategy for enabling architects to deal with the problems of the "real world" after they graduate. The "purifiers," as I will call them, are convinced that this goal is best achieved by inculcating the basic principles which are involved in the production of architecture as an ideal-type of cultural object, even if this may require assuming a hierarchy of values about building which does not correspond to the expectations and choices of clients in advanced industrial society, and even if it suggests that the student ignore the practical constraints imposed by the day-to-day organization of building production. The opposition (I will call them the "simulators") argues that the system of ideas required to support this approach has unanticipated negative effects. Students educated in a setting so divorced from the real conditions of architectural production acquire attitudes which make it more difficult for them to adjust to the building constraints they encounter after they graduate. The "simulators" also argue that in order to maintain this ideal-typical conception of architecture within the schools, faculty tend to present students only with studio projects in which the ideal-typical approach is most likely to be realized in actual building production, such as museums or art galleries. The effect of this on students, the "simulators" say, is to remove them even further from opportunities to learn how to improve the design of the ordinary, largely commercial, buildings that will constitute most of their practice, such as shopping centers, offices, and housing.

There is no doubt that in the last 15 years, despite the fact that the Geddes-Spring report advocated another position, the "purifiers" have dominated the schools. This trend is linked to the rise of "postmodernism." It is not surprising, therefore, that we should be able to find in the writings of Robert Venturi, one of the American founders of this movement, a very explicit call to architects to concentrate on the study of architecture itself. Venturi's statement is in his *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, which was published in 1966, the same year that the Geddes-Spring report appeared. Venturi wrote:

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[2] Robert Geddes and Bernard Spring, *A Study of Education for Environmental Design*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 9–10.

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> I make no special attempt to relate architecture to other things. I have not tried to "improve the connection between science and technology on the one hand, and the humanities and the social sciences on the other and make of architecture a more human social art." I try to talk about architecture rather than around it. . . . The architect's ever diminishing power and his growing ineffectualness in shaping the whole environment can perhaps be reversed, ironically, by narrowing his concerns and concentrating on his own job.[3]

I believe that the "simulators" may be on to something important. In taking their side, I do not mean to imply that the school situation can or should be identical with the world found in practice. The rationale in all the professions for moving from an educational system based on an apprenticeship in an office to a school curriculum was the conviction that lawyers, physicians, and architects, to be really professional, needed to conceive of the problems of their field from an overall theoretical perspective; and that this could be best achieved in a setting that encouraged abstraction and the analysis of hypothetical as well as real-life situations. However, many architecture schools probably have gone so far in this direction that the problems set for students are based on distorted rather than just hypothetical assumptions. What students are led to think about, therefore, is not simply biased or devoid of content, but actually is incorrect. Oftentimes I find students, for example, who do not realize that the general public does not grasp the intention behind the semiotic content of their designs, a content which the student assumes is self-evident. Or they develop plans to be used by members of social classes whose expectations are different from the groups who, in fact, are likely to use them. In other cases, students will make an effort to incorporate what they imagine to be popular iconography in their buildings, without investigating whether the symbol systems really correspond to what the average citizen desires. The biggest area of confusion seems to lie in the nature of clienteles, the building capacity of the construction industry, the development process, and how architects get jobs. Here students are oppressed by romantic beliefs. These beliefs influence both those who are oriented to elite markets and the students who are populists. They impede the ability of either to formulate designs that make sense in the twin worlds of architecture and buildings.

Aesthetics and objectivity

A second issue that confronts architectural education is how teachers can impart the ideas, approaches, and methods that govern their

[3] Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture.* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), pp. 20–21.

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pedagogy generally, but especially the evaluations and judgments they offer about studio projects. This has been a more serious issue in the twentieth century than ever before in the history of architectural education, largely as the consequence of two developments in the discipline. In the first place, architecture like every other profession and field has been subjected to the aura surrounding the natural sciences, in which the principle of objectively verifiable knowledge has been used as the criterion of intellectual adequacy. For those schooled in the sciences, or who take the sciences as their model, the architectural enterprise becomes suspect. Second, although all aesthetic judgments are subject to this attack, architecture is more vulnerable to the critique than the other arts just because it necessarily deals with an artifact that involves attention to subjects the knowledge about which is often based on scientific investigation: for example, building structure, heating, and lighting. Indeed, the increasing focus on the professional aspects of architecture during the past century has reinforced this emphasis, leading in turn to an interest in giving aesthetic judgments the same epistemological base that applies with respect to pragmatic considerations. Sophistication in theoretical matters, after all, is one of the features by which a profession is distinguished from a trade.[4]

I keep on wondering whether the concern for the objective verifiability of theoretical knowledge in architecture is more prominent in this country than in other advanced industrialized nations. There is some reason to think so because American architectural education was almost from its beginnings university-based, and as a university-based system was forced to adopt the standards of scientific and liberal arts disciplines, in which logical consistency and verifiability of theoretical ideas were given top priority. In the American case, the scientific mode of thought was given further weight by the adoption of the German university model as the standard for graduate education. In his presidential address to the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) several years ago, Donlyn Lyndon discussed this background and made some further points about the consequences of the university context:

> All other factors considered, I would suggest that the university setting is presently the most influential force for change in architectural education. It determines ultimately the membership of the profession; it establishes the microcosm in which young architects develop any very cohesive view

[4] It is conceivable that the tremendous hostility among the post-modernist architects to a behavioral approach to design—although it had many sources, including the association of the behavioral approach with welfare state architecture—developed in part as a resistance against the application of the scientific model to still one more area in which architecture formerly regarded itself as autonomous.

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> of the profession and its calling, and in which many of their most exemplary learning situations are formed; it gives direction through its own internal organization to the creative energies and attention of those who have chosen careers in education; and it has fostered careers that are alternatives to that of the practicing professional.[5]

On a more mundane level, it can be said that clients expect architects to justify their proposals when making their presentations, and that this leads to an emphasis on the capability to formulate the theories which underlie their ideas. Here again the modern mentality, which in part is an outgrowth of the scientific emphasis that dominates the contemporary university, and which is represented by the rationality of industry and bureaucracies, reinforces the pressure on architects to explain their ideas in matter-of-fact terms.

It must be realized, however, that what is nonsense to some audiences is perfectly comprehensible to others, and vice versa. There are patrons and clients for whom the most important facts about buildings are their "image quality," what they stand for and signify. Indeed, it is this inclination in recent years that has encouraged the shift in skyscraper design from the glass box to neo-classicism and terra cotta ornamentation. Nevertheless, even when the expressive side of architecture is considered sympathetically (this is not to say that all art is only about expression), someone in the client's organization will worry about the pragmatic aspects of the building design. It is at this level that the architect or another member of the design team will be required to explain the building in the language that is standard in technological and scientific circles.

The resolution of the conflict between the artistic and the pragmatic sides of architecture is a major issue in practice; both the architect and the architectural firm must be capable of handling it successfully. There is no easy solution, because the relationship between art, the building, getting the job, and persuading the client is very complicated. From a marketing perspective, the feature which distinguishes architecture from other building disciplines is its aesthetic side—if architects are going to maintain a hold on work, it is wise for them to emphasize the formal and aesthetic aspects of their production. As for its implications for theory, the important fact about the aesthetic dimension is the convention of the romantic artist, shared by architects and some clients, which liberates the architect from the obligation to be articulate. The building itself is the statement and thus substitutes for many of the forms of representation on which other

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[5] Donlyn Lyndon, "Architecture Education Here," *Journal of Architectural Education*. Vol. XXXI, no. 3, p. 5.

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disciplines and professions hinge their claims for social attention. In recent years, as many intellectuals and critics, not to say some popular movements, have turned their back on technology because of its inhumane consequences for the human soul and the environment, the inarticulate artist has come to be admired just because the type of skill he demonstrates is supposed to have a natural or intuitive base. Architects sometimes capitalize on this identity, and advertise themselves in these terms; on other occasions, it is their secret, private fantasy which they hide from clients in order to appear more responsible and practical.

It seems pretty clear to me that architecture schools now face a dilemma. On the one hand, they are under pressure to make their principles explicit and to act like the educators of professionals whose skill is grounded in the sciences—pressures that stem from the university community of which they are a part. In the typical university, for example, the personnel review process is more welcoming to a promotion packet from an architect who specializes in computer aided design and whose work is carried out in the language of mathematics and engineering, than it is to the dossier of the standard design teacher whose case for tenure is based on some premiated buildings (the merits of which seem to be arguable, judging by the range of opinions about them in the professional press and among his fellow architects). At the same time, of course, the educated designer and critic knows that the architectural disciplines grounded in the sciences can do no more than support the exercise and application of the architectural imagination. Architectural education is really a version of aesthetic education, and it may be that education in the other arts, rather than law or medicine, should be compared when we wonder how best to deal with problems of the schools. A comparison with the history of teaching music may be especially worthwhile since composition was accepted as a university subject in American universities before architecture, and along with architecture is now more fully established than any of the other arts.

The Design Methods movement

There was a flurry of interest in the years immediately following World War II in modeling the teaching of design on the sciences. The trend was part of a larger movement in many fields, including the "softer" social sciences, to substitute more rigorous, quantitative methods for an earlier dependence on historical and more intuitive methods. The architectural version of the trend was the Design Methods movement. This movement, which still has currency in some schools, attempted to formulate standard techniques which could be used by an educated professional to derive building designs from a

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program, or list of building functions. The Design Methods approach was accompanied by the growth of "workshops" in which students from architecture and allied disciplines would discuss and try to evaluate the proposed designs, using objective standards based on information from the social and technological disciplines. The workshops often became a substitute for the studio system.

As I have indicated, the dominant approach now is the reverse of what the Design Methods movement advocated. Educators have come to believe that architecture requires the intuitive method, and that there is no adequate replacement for the subjective knowledge a student acquires through the experience of trying to achieve formal order out of the chaos represented by the client's program. However, despite the restoration of the studio system to its former eminence in the schools, the critique launched by the Design Methods movement has had an enduring impact. One such impact is represented by the programs in architectural research and building research, which I discuss in the next section. The other impact, and surely more important for its influence on contemporary architectural education and discourse, is the revival and adaptation of a pre-twentieth century tradition in architectural education which linked the studio system to a program of teaching in philosophy and humanistic studies. With the burgeoning in Europe and America of critical studies in these disciplines useful for analyzing literary texts, humanistic studies today offer ripe pickings for the teacher in architecture who is looking for a method that is rational and intellectual to address to his discipline. The adaptation of analytic concepts from the modern humanistic disciplines has the further advantage that it does not require the reduction of architectural phenomena merely to the program of functional spaces that is implied by the reliance on the scientific model. Thus we find that among the most popular subjects and approaches for architects to study and talk about now are structural anthropology, hermeneutics, and semiology. When taught within the framework of the architecture schools, by architecture faculty themselves, these courses are often lumped together under the rubric "history and theory." One hazard in the history/theory sequence is that its focus on sources in the humanities of formal ideas that govern design conveys a view of the architect's task that is as one-sided as the belief of some Design Methods theorists that good architecture can be achieved through the direct extrapolation from a program of building functions. Obviously the need is to keep both the humanistic and pragmatic approaches in mind at the same time. Robert Maxwell has employed the concept of structure, or structuralism, to unite the two approaches, thus exploiting the fortuitous

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availability of the same word in two widely separated but nevertheless relevant intellectual traditions:

> Buildings will then be treated *both* as functioning entities, to be measured against rational goals, *and* as signifying entities, to be measured within the evolving body of knowledge which we may call a critical tradition. Two theories are necessary, because in the time and space allowed to us, we are able only to do a very little at one time, and final explanation will probably elude us. But the two areas of theory are within the same concepts: that *structure* is the key to behavior and process, and by this essential fact they allow us to see design as a legitimate subject of university study and practice. The present system suffers still from a dichotomy between the paradigm of natural science and that of private intuitional judgment. Instead we are aiming at the theoretical unity of the field which is addressed to the production of artifice, the science of the artificial produced within intentionality, and the artificial produced ineluctably and unconsciously by the very process of development in history.
>
> If this theoretical unity can be perceived as underlying two quite distinct modes of analysis—*the constructing of artifacts and the construing of texts*—then we may hope that both modes will be furthered, together, within the university, and within its School of Architecture.
>
> Design teaching could then proceed by a revaluation and rationalisation of the critical mode. If it is true that we cannot teach the processes by which the intuition cuts through complexity to produce a result, it is still the case that we can examine that result and analyse it. Intuition itself cannot be taught, but what it has produced can be criticised.[6]

The method advocated by Maxwell for dealing with the nature and role of theory that is most appropriate for architecture may be unique to this discipline. However, it also illustrates an approach to defining theoretical inquiry that is consistent with the special character and function of theory in professional fields as distinguished from academic disciplines. Donald Schon and Chris Argyris have discussed the distinction in several books in which they emphasize the difference between *espoused theory*, the concepts which professionals claim to be applying in their work, and *theory-in-use*, the ideas and methods which they use in treating cases and solving problems.[7]

Argyris and Schon often illustrate the two types of theory with cases in architecture. They point out that architects are unable to provide an espoused theory of design, even though creative architects are perfectly capable of designing new and imaginative structures. Mystique, they point out, is absolutely central to such professionals.

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[6] Robert Maxwell, *Two Theories of Architecture.* (London: University College, 1982), p. 20.

[7] Cf. Chris Argyris and Donald Schon, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness.* (San Francisco: Joosey-Bass, 1974), *passim.*

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Although in practice architects may not have to concern themselves with their inability to espouse a coherent theory, difficulties do arise when these professionals begin to teach and assume the role of educators. Then they find it difficult to discuss pedagogical theories because often they have none, and indeed are worried that too much self-consciousness about education can destroy the very intuitive skills on which they are convinced their approach to practice is based. It is difficult for practicing professionals to make explicit the grounds for their actions. Every professional considers himself an artist to some degree. However, in architecture the tradition in support of the professional mystique is not as easily challenged by rational-scientific approaches as it is in medicine, say, or in law. We know, of course, that architectural education can become very "academic," but because the typical design studio is supposed to generate a proposal that is buildable, the schools have not been captured by espoused theory in the way in which this type of theory has come to dominate education in the other major professions.

I stated earlier that my concern was how teachers of architecture deal with the need to make theory more explicit—but my discussion indicates that not all faculty or schools recognize this need to the same degree. Yet it does seem that the issue cannot be avoided, if only because the university setting propels architects in this direction. The big shift that has come about is that this need must no longer be responded to only by use of the scientific model. It now can be handled by theories of interpretation that have arisen from the hermeneutic disciplines. There continues to be some difficulty in applying the theory to design projects, because of two conditions. The theory is an interpretative theory and therefore is most useful after a design has been created. Also, the theory is examined in courses and seminars, and the faculty who teach them are often not the same people as those who teach the studios.

It should not be forgotten, however, that a good deal of the energy behind the attention to theory comes from the architectural research groups which became established in the schools along with the Design Methods movement. The members of these groups are dedicated to the view that the survival of the profession and the discipline, too, depends upon moving architecture to develop methods for cumulating knowledge in the linear pattern common in the advanced sciences. Most of them are engaged in what should perhaps be called "building" research rather than research on architecture since their investigations address mainly pragmatic issues. Perhaps just because the work of the building researchers does not often address aesthetic issues, the build-

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ing researchers are more at home with the scientific models than other factions in the schools. They really are trying to establish causal relations between the built environment and human action or behavior, and for this endeavor explanations based on clearly formulated and testable theoretical ideas are an absolute necessity.

Research and design

The discussion of building research and its place in the schools touches on a third enduring issue of architectural education: the schools' responsibility for developing new knowledge. This responsibility, like some of those mentioned earlier, has been thrust upon the schools by a combination of factors, many of which have been mentioned previously. The development of knowledge is one of the hallmarks of a profession, schools for all professions are regularly engaged in the enterprise, university faculties encourage research, and the funding of it has become a method schools often use to support design teaching and other standard courses. There is no question, therefore, that architecture schools, whatever their ideological stance, are often pressed into evaluating themselves in terms of their contribution to research.

As I said earlier, the demand placed on architecture schools to foster a research tradition constitutes a greater challenge than is true for education in other professions. It is characteristic of artistic knowledge that its development proceeds more circuitously than in the sciences; indeed, it is not progressive in the sense in which we think of scientists refining conclusions developed by their predecessors. Furthermore, even though design, the product of the architect's work, may be informed and shaped by theory, it represents a corruption of the scientific notion of verification to claim that the designed artifact tests, or is intended to test, a theory. Consequently, if architecture schools wish to meet the challenge presented by the university scientific tradition, they usually have to do so outside the system of teaching design. Given the inevitable emphasis in architectural education on the studio, this means that research tends to be seen as a threat to the studio, and vice versa.

The conflict between the studio system and other pedagogical methods is a problem even for the progress of humanistic research in architecture, such as the courses, seminars, and associated programs in architectural history. As a result, there is no universal pattern for the teaching of architectural history in American schools today. In larger schools, history is sometimes taught by faculty in a separate department staffed by architectural historians. There are other schools, how-

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ever, in which architecture students acquire their knowledge of history from faculty in departments of art history outside the schools. Along with separate departments of architectural history, or courses in art history departments, and sometimes in the absence of these forms of academic organization, instruction in architectural history becomes a sideline, almost an avocational interest of studio design faculty. Regardless of the organizational pattern that prevails, the big pressure in the schools is for history to be dealt with by people who can apply it to the design issues in the same terms that these issues are formulated by the studio design faculty. Design teachers usually disagree a fair amount over what they consider "good" design or "correct" architecture, and consequently also disagree about how history should be taught, and by whom. In the end most studio faculty prefer to offer their own version of the history of architecture, a version that can be used to buttress their personal theories of architecture and to provide the ground for an attack on the architectural theories they oppose. The use of history to lend an imprimatur or to forge a polemic is not the view of history that is preferred by professional historians, which of course encourages the tension between art or architectural history departments and architecture schools. The research enterprise in architectural history often loses out in the battle, so that again we find a situation in which the research tradition has a difficult time becoming established in schools of architecture.

Looking at architectural education nationwide, it is not easy to generalize about whether research is now more or less institutionalized. Viewed from the perspective of the history of the schools over the past century, probably it has become better established, but there has also been a good deal of backing and filling with the spread of the postmodernist devaluation of building pragmatics. There is less confusion now than there was two decades ago about the relationship of research to design. Each is thought of as a largely independent type of intellectual activity, operating in its own bailiwick and more likely to be creative when separate from the other. Research and design may not interact with or influence each other very much within the schools, except perhaps at the level of administration—where they compete for budgets and faculty positions—but it is important to realize that they come together in the world of practice.

The absence of a dialogue among scientifically-oriented building researchers, scholars based in the humanistic tradition, and designers does mean that architectural education currently is probably more unstable than it was even right after World War II, when it was trying to adapt to the new comprehensive practices. Most schools are very

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committed to the principle that the art of design must be defended in American culture which, for all its celebration of the aesthetic dimension devoid of moral and ethical content, is viewed nevertheless to be grudging in its support for the products of high culture. While preserving their idea of architecture as an advanced cultural discipline, the schools at the same time recognize the need to prepare students to serve the primary clients and users of architects, large private and public bureaucracies with their concern for the pragmatics of buildings. In an effort to strengthen its cultural roots, architecture in the university setting is actively engaged in a search for texts in other humanistic disciplines—literature and philosophy especially—to which architecture can be compared and from which it can derive theories and paradigms for the interpretation and justification of design. Despite these programs, however, the schools are forced to recognize that they cannot totally exclude the scientific intelligence from their midst, and indeed find it necessary to undertake programs of building research in order to improve their stature in the university community as a whole.

Architecture and public policy

A fourth issue facing the schools is how the curriculum ought to deal with the policy questions that are connected to the position of architecture in contemporary America. I am thinking of such questions as whether there should be increased funding for landmarks preservation programs; what federal policy should be with respect to allocating funds between "high culture" and "popular culture" projects; the importance of awarding all government building commissions through design competitions; the measures required to make housing available to groups which cannot afford the dwelling units provided through unregulated market processes; the development of a national building code; or the advisability of a professional code of ethics for architects. The list could go on, because there are so many issues of cultural, social, and economic policy in advanced industrial societies that impinge on architectural ideas and practice. They affect not only the ways in which architects think about the problems of our field; they also have immediate effects on the market for school graduates and the skills which are in demand. If the state or federal governments, for example, are subsidizing non-market housing, it is likely that there will be many good jobs for architects dealing with this building type. If the public sector is encouraging programs in historic preservation, then there will be a demand for the kind of knowledge that is required for restoration of old buildings. On the other hand, if

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public investment is languishing, or there are no effective agencies to represent the public's interest with respect to the environment, this, too, influences architecture, as it has in recent decades. The narcissism that is associated with the particular version of post-modernist architectural production that has been popular recently in the United States, for example, surely owes something to the revival of rugged individualism as the dominant ethic for dealing with urban issues.

The schools are good places to examine the connections between architecture and public policy because their curriculum is more independent of the market for architectural services than are the fortunes of the AIA and registered practitioners. The schools generally can maintain some respect for the issues in the discipline that are recurrent and persistent, even though not currently in fashion. It does not always seem that way to the profession, I know—indeed, from the practitioner's point of view it is the schools that are swayed most of all by museum and magazine attention to certain architects and to swiftly changing styles. This judgment may apply to some schools whose faculty members have become culture industry heroes, but for American architectural education nationwide, it is not accurate.

On the other hand, even though schools are good places to examine the connections of architectural ideas and practice to policy, they are much less committed to this endeavor than they were in the 20 years immediately following World War II. There are very few schools now which offer students the opportunity—fairly common at that time—to collaborate with students from other design-related fields. Beginning in the early 1950s, with programs at Harvard and Penn in urban design and civic design, respectively, there was a desire to emphasize the importance of the connection between the *art* of architecture and problems of housing and urban policy. By the late 1960s there were as many as 70 "urban design" degree programs in American universities, but now there are only about 25, despite a 50 percent increase since the 1950s in the number of architecture schools and departments. Many professional degree programs in architecture in the earlier period required students to take courses in zoning and planning, urban research methods, and the behavioral sciences, but in most schools these courses, even if they are still taught under architectural auspices, are no longer required. In some of the leading schools, such as those at Harvard and Princeton, the urban planning departments have been transferred out from under the umbrella of architecture or design to other schools in the university.

The reluctance of architectural faculty to concern themselves with policy matters is consistent with the views of those I referred to earlier

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as "purifiers," and is quite consistent with the statement by Venturi quoted earlier, about the advisability of "narrowing" the architect's concerns. I believe, however, that some of the post-modernist architects are beginning to realize the costs involved in the wholesale adoption of this strategy. Venturi's own firm, for example, has in the last few years begun to emphasize its competence to address urban design and policy questions, partly in an effort to create a market setting for its primary service of designing buildings. Just under ten years ago when the Harvard and Princeton urban planning departments were moved out of the architecture schools, it looked as if the ejection or voluntary withdrawal of the planning departments was going to become a major trend in American higher education. However, no other major university has followed the lead of these schools, and at Harvard one big question now is how best to reinvigorate its urban design program and incorporate some of the domestic policy concerns that were abandoned when the urban planners were moved to the Kennedy School.

The practical problems that architects face in maintaining an image of professional competence when they narrow the scope of their services and eschew claims in the policy area is revealed in the following exchange between Peter Eisenman and the Houston-based developer Gerald Hines:

> *Eisenman:* Why is it that when the government wants a legal opinion it goes to the Harvard Law School or Stanford Law School for advice? Why is it that when there is a question of development or environmental concern, nobody goes to the schools of architecture for advice? They go to the practicing architects.
>
> *Hines:* Basically, one is in touch with, and in the leadership of, the field and the other is not. In architecture the practitioners are on the cutting edge and the academicians are not considered to be on the cutting edge.
>
> *Eisenman:* Why is it that in business the academicians really *are* on the cutting edge? The Harvard Business School is a very important place.
>
> *Hines:* In comparison with the Graduate School of Design, yes. It is a reflection of the leadership that the Business School has taken and how it is perceived by the business community and the government.
>
> *Eisenman:* Even practicing architects never *make* policy; they carry out policy. Philip Johnson, Cesar Pelli, I. M. Pei, and Kevin Roche do not formulate policy. Yet the leadership in the business community or the leaders in the legal community formulate policy. Do you think that could change or should change?
>
> *Hines:* It all depends on who the people are at those institutions. If you can assemble a group of people who are on the cutting edge, then you might achieve what you are talking about. I do not see it happening in the near future, however.[8]

[8] Gerald P. Hines and Peter Eisenman, "Interview," *Skyline*. October, 1982, p. 21.

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This dialogue is a peculiar combination of sophistication and intellectual insularity. For example, Eisenman contradicts himself when he says that people go to practitioners rather than to architecture faculty to get advice on urban and environmental matters, and then notes that Johnson and other architects do not make policy, but implement the policies of others. Clients and government officials do not seek out architects for advice on public issues because they know from experience, unfortunately, that architects generally are ignorant and inexperienced in these areas, especially architects who were educated during the last ten years, and who take as their role models many of the leading figures in the American post-modernist tradition. At the same time, it should be said that there are on the faculty of many architecture schools in this country, men and women who are knowledgeable about "environmental concerns," but they probably are not the breed of architect touted by Eisenman and his colleagues in the high art culture of architecture. Furthermore, contrary to what Eisenman and Hines assume, it often *is* the faculty members who teach in these subject areas, rather than practitioners, who serve as consultants and write the reports which have helped to influence housing policy, building codes, and environmental legislation. It is probably true in the 1980s that there are relatively few teachers within the architecture faculties who are concerned about the public policy aspects of design and that policy-oriented scholars are now teaching in their own bailiwicks, in schools or institutes of public affairs, government and politics. Of course, the difficulty in relying on these scholars to address architectural questions is that they usually do not know much about the design fields and also usually exhibit the bias—characteristic of the social science disciplines—that architecture is not a relevant and important factor in social development and behavior. In my view, the lack of attention to public policy issues in architecture programs and the corresponding unfamiliarity with the subject in public affairs programs is all the more reason for encouraging the design schools to introduce courses and studio problems that are deliberately focused on the relation of architecture to policy.

The case for perpetual motion

In the years ahead there is a good chance that the architecture schools of this country will alter the theoretical content of their curricula and even adopt new teaching methods to supplement the traditional studio system. Some changes are likely to occur if only for the reason that the issues discussed in this article, although enduring and therefore recurrent, nevertheless fluctuate in importance and saliency

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in response to conditions affecting professional practice and the requirements of the university setting. For example, the recent tendency to emphasize the formal and aesthetic content of buildings is much more pronounced than often has been characteristic of American schools. It has contributed sometimes deliberately, but in other cases unintentionally, to contract the scope of the architect's professional competence as viewed by the client. The schools are preparing students for a practicing profession whose members are persistently concerned about whether they can hold their own in a building industry that is in constant flux. Therefore, educators can expect that they will be asked to apply greater thought and effort than they do now toward integrating design skills with other kinds of knowledge important for building construction. Shifts in the balance of curriculum subjects have occurred more than once in the history of American schools, for example, in the 1930s when curricula to train "executive architects" were the fashion of the time and again during the 1960s when the big concern was for user-oriented architecture. New versions of these earlier educational programs to assure a role for architects that is in tune with the changes in clienteles and building production systems probably are ready to surface. Pressure from university administrations in favor of fundable research is likely to reinforce an interest in broadening the scope of architecture again. The same effect is likely to follow from university development campaigns which try to tap the only major funding source that has any connection with architecture, namely, the real estate industry. The industry's leaders have become more sophisticated in the last decade at the same time that the American urban environment is being shaped by developers on a scale without precedent in the history of this country. Many of the wealthiest and most powerful developers now regard the architectural profession, and therefore its schools, as potentially useful to their ambitions.

With these changes in curriculum in the offing, I do not think that the schools can remain content with their almost exclusive reliance on the studio method for educating architects. On this subject, too, American schools have vacillated. The past decade has witnessed an uncritical celebration of the studio, even surpassing in excitement the enthusiasm which greeted the original adoption of the method at the end of the nineteenth century. But in the 1930s and after World War II, there was the widespread sentiment that the studio method was an inefficient means for teaching general principles. And there was some doubt about whether it was useful for encouraging serious thought and investigation of issues of detail involved with building, including issues of style, form, or building function. I suspect we will see a revival

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of some of these criticisms and renewed attention to enhancing the relevance of lecture and seminar courses and to designing case issue approaches for learning about architectural problems.

The capacity of the architecture schools to manifest the dynamic response that I envisage for them in the coming decade is, as I have suggested, confirmed by their history of facing persistent and recurring issues, but doing so with shifts in nuance and emphasis that respond to new trends in practice and the changing demands of the universities. This capacity obviously is a considerable resource. But there seems to be a corresponding weakness of the schools, at least judging by their history, and it is this: After each phase of curriculum revision is in place, and a generation of students has struggled to integrate their skills through the use of new instructional methods, the pendulum swings back. The schools concentrate on the aesthetics of design again, the profession loses once more its connection to public issues, and leadership on environmental questions passes to builders, contractors, and developers. Is this lack of a record of sustained progress a characteristic of professional education generally? Is it a response of the schools to the university, an institution notorious for rejecting, then adopting again pedagogical theories and attitudes that were advocated by previous generations? Or are the oscillation and vacillation principally a reflection of some of the unique features of architecture as a discipline and a professional activity: that buildings have both artistic significance and practical purposes; that their construction and interpretation draw on the humanities *and* the sciences; that the architect must be a highly competitive entrepreneur while upholding the standards of a profession; and that buildings, no matter how private in conception and sponsorship, are intertwined with public policy and affect the way people live.

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The "Color Line" Today

GLENN C. LOURY

Reynolds Farley: **Blacks and Whites: Narrowing the Gap?** *Harvard University Press. 235 pp. $22.50.*

Alphonso Pinkney: **The Myth of Black Progress.** *Cambridge University Press. 198 pp. $17.95.*

William Julius Wilson: **The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions** *(second edition). University of Chicago Press. 243 pp. $8.00 paper.*

IN 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." Forty years later Gunnar Myrdal characterized the race problem in the United States as a great dilemma that, if not resolved, threatened the ultimate success of our democratic experiment. Within a decade there had begun a national effort to confront this dilemma. There ensued painful conflict, but also enlightened legislation, courageous leadership, and greater progress than many Americans thought possible (or, in some cases, desirable).

The legal and political transformation of racial issues that has occurred in the U.S. since World War II represents a remarkable accomplishment, powerfully illustrating the vitality and virtue of our free institutions. Quite simply, in little more than a generation we have advanced from a circumstance in which the great majority of Americans were indifferent or actively hostile to blacks' quest for full citizenship rights, to one in which racial equality of opportunity is a value staunchly upheld by the law and universally embraced in our politics. This achievement, attained with comparative little violence, contrasts quite favorably with the experience of many nations whose very survival is threatened by longstanding conflicts among ethnic and religious groups.

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Nevertheless, America still faces a "problem of the color line." The dream that race might some day become an insignificant category in our civic life, so eloquently articulated by Martin Luther King, Jr. in his renowned "I Have A Dream" speech, seems naively utopian today. It is no small irony that, two decades after King's moving oration, the passionate evocation in public debate of his "colorblind" ideal is for many an indication of limited commitment to the goal of racial justice. It is also ironic that attempts by social analysts to demonstrate the efficacy of the civil rights legislation of the 1960s, by reporting evidence of a decline in discrimination since then, have been bitterly denounced by persons and organizations who urged that the legislation be adopted. The reported progress is said to be "illusory," and the motives of the analysts are called into question.

THOUGH IRONIC, this state of affairs is not inexplicable, for the stakes in the debate over black progress are very high. Without doubt, there now exists a sizeable number of impoverished blacks for whom the civil rights movement has done very little. Their increasing numbers and desperate plight lend an air of unreality to any finding of black "progress." Moreover, in the 1960s a very powerful idea was born, the widespread acceptance of which has made it difficult for advocates of blacks' interests to acknowledge any diminution in discrimination. This idea, which Thomas Sowell has called the "civil rights vision," is the general presumption that, due to our history of social oppression, blacks' failure to reach parity in American society derives exclusively from the effects of past and ongoing racism, and can only be remedied through state intervention. This notion serves to rationalize the embarrassing pathology of the ghetto, even as it legitimizes governmental transfers to the black middle class.

The reasoning that leads to this curious result takes several steps. First, the large and growing number of black poor directly attests to the existence and severity of racial inequality. This inequality, in turn, must necessarily be understood as deriving from discrimination. (The unpalatable alternative is that blacks are less effective competitors in the American economy—a possibility that will not be taken seriously as long as its very contemplation is regarded as a racist act.) But discrimination is best remedied by ensuring equal results in those arenas where blacks and whites directly compete. The conclusion is that racial injustice is best ameliorated through adopting the goal of proportionate representation for blacks in business, professional, and governmental employments. Thus the squalor and hopelessness of the Harlem ghetto comes to ensure the legitimacy of preferential treatment for black medical school applicants from Scarsdale.

But racially sensitive admissions and hiring programs are not consistent with the ideal of "colorblind" state action. Embracing them implies the tacit repudiation of that ideal. Moreover, the argument for race-conscious policy critically depends on linking current deficiencies in the unaided achievements of (mostly middle class) blacks to the

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universally acknowledged sins of the past. This link is weaker if the recent progress against discrimination is taken to be great. (Of course, aid to poor persons, black or not, is in no way undermined by announcing progress against discrimination.) Thus, were it to be widely held that the civil rights legislation of the 1960s has worked, explicitly racial claims would become difficult to justify. Beyond this, doubt would be cast upon the favored explanation of sometimes substantial racial differences in achievement. Every finding of a diminution in discrimination implicitly raises the terrifying question: "Why then do blacks not succeed?" Thus, the publication of a study assessing change in the status of blacks is a political, not simply an intellectual, event.

A MAJOR EVENT of this sort occurred in 1978 with the appearance of the first edition of *The Declining Significance of Race.* William Julius Wilson created a furor with the profoundly subversive thesis that, in the modern period of American race relations, "fundamental economic and political changes have made economic class position more important than race in determining black chances for occupational mobility." Wilson's idea was not new—Bayard Rustin had predicted this would become the case over a decade before. But Rustin wrote before any interests were vested in affirmative action, and at a time when the benefits of the civil rights revolution could only be guessed at. Wilson, employing an original theoretical perspective and supporting his argument with a wealth of empirical data, posed a direct challenge to the "civil rights vision." While well aware that a "problem of the color line" remains, he would not define it as "discrimination." Rather, he contended that the caste-like exclusion of *all* blacks from full participation in American life, characteristic of race relations from the Emancipation through the end of World War II, has ended. Those blacks languishing in big-city ghettos confront problems deriving from changes in economic structure that would be only marginally ameliorated were they somehow to become white.

For Wilson, today's "problem of the color line" consists in the vastly disproportionate representation of blacks among the urban underclass. Though "a history of discrimination and oppression created a huge black underclass," he believes that subsequent "technological and economic revolutions have combined to insure it a permanent status." While blacks with skills and education do face racial antagonism, he concludes that "the economic and political systems in the U.S. have demonstrated remarkable flexibility in allowing talented blacks to fill positions of prestige and influence at the same time that these systems have shown persistent rigidity in handling the problems of lower class blacks." Most troublesome for adherents to the "civil rights vision," he holds that a focus solely on racial disparities, and on remedies defined exclusively in racial terms, will be inadequate to solve the contemporary race problem. He urges instead a broad-based program of "economic reform," which would focus on assuring employment at non-poverty wages for all seeking work.

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Wilson makes skillful use of historical, sociological, and economic data to support his tightly reasoned argument. His book is an ambitious attempt at a general theory of race relations that, though motivated by a concern for current policy issues, seeks to explain black-white interaction throughout post-emancipation American history within a single framework. Though I do not judge the effort entirely successful, his is an original and provocative argument that will continue to influence the analysis of racial affairs in the U.S. for years to come. Upon its initial publication the book received the Spivack Award of the American Sociological Association as an outstanding contribution to sociological literature.

YET THIS PROFOUND and insightful piece of analysis was denounced almost before it could be read. The so-called "black sociologists" were particularly incensed. We learn in Alphonso Pinkney's stridently doctrinaire and tendentious tract, *The Myth of Black Progress*, that, shortly after Wilson's Spivack Award was announced, "several black sociologists met in San Francisco and expressed their outrage at [the] conservative trend" exemplified by Wilson's work. His book, though but one of many examples of "inappropriate analyses" cited by Pinkney, is particularly egregious because, in addition to being a leading scholar in his field and recently becoming the chairman of one of the world's top sociology departments, William Julius Wilson is also black. Accordingly, the Association of Black Sociologists issued a proclamation censuring Wilson, attacking the sociology profession as racist, and suggesting that the acclaim afforded Wilson's book might become the basis for the "further suppression of blacks." Fearing that "government policy makers would seize on [Wilson's] pronouncements to discontinue such programs as affirmative action [and] busing," these guardians of black sociological virtue decided that "someone [should] come forth and present ... a more objective exegesis of the black population in the U.S." Thus, after six years' gestation, was born Professor Pinkney's tract.

But it is far less than a refutation, or even a rebuttal, of Wilson's thesis. Rather, it is an extended polemic that substitutes assertions for data, and slogans for analysis. Its tone is shrill and often absurdly hysterical. Concerning special preferences for black medical school applicants: "To deny these preferences to the victims of centuries of oppression by the society can only be considered a gross act of cruelty." Concerning discrimination in housing: "There is every reason to believe [he presents not a scrap of data] that the best-educated and most economically mobile blacks have as much difficulty obtaining housing in most sections of the country as their low-income fellow blacks." Concerning loyalty to one's race: "Black sociologists who [like Wilson] support the conservative movement are not unlike government officials in ... South Vietnam who supported American aggression against their own people." Pinkney's aggression against free inquiry, reason, and the standards of evidence and argument widely accepted in the

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social sciences, would seem to be rather more to the point. A sad spectacle indeed, this work seems the last gasp of the intellectually bankrupt "black sociology" movement.

A SERIOUS and scholarly effort to address the question of black progress is undertaken by Reynolds Farley in *Blacks and Whites: Narrowing the Gap?* Professor Farley, employing what he calls a "demographic approach," provides a straightforward summary of the decennial census and annual Current Population Survey data, focusing on the extent of black progress in the areas of education, employment, and income. He proposes three different interpretations of the experience of the past two decades: a pessimistic view—that the policies of the 1960s have done little to alleviate blacks' plight; an optimistic view—that significant and widespread progress has occurred; and a polarization thesis—that the black middle class has gained, but the black underclass has been unaffected by the changes. This last he identifies with Wilson, and devotes a chapter to its investigation.

The data gathered in this compendium are comprehensive and effectively presented. The work is well organized and well written, and should prove a useful reference on recent trends in racial inequality. Assessing the overall degree of progress, Farley concludes that the optimistic view is the most nearly correct of the three:

> There is good reason to be particularly critical of the view that black gains are superficial. In the important areas of education, occupations, and earnings, racial differences declined substantially. This is not tokenism. Throughout the entire economy and in all regions, racial differences on the most important indicators are smaller now than before.... [There is] strong evidence that discrimination in earnings has declined considerably.

Yet Farley is not entirely comfortable with his own findings. A liberal social scientist who has been writing on racial issues for two decades, he is well aware of the political ramifications attending the publication of his scholarship. He worries that while "congratulating ourselves ... for the real and impressive progress we have made toward racial equality" we may "lose sight of the distance that remains to be traveled." While avoiding Pinkney's hysteria, he recalls that "advances made by blacks after the Civil War were largely eliminated in the period following Reconstruction." Though certain that no similar reversal is imminent, he asserts that "many more decades of change similar to that of the 1960s and 1970s will be necessary if racial differences are to disappear." This change (he asserts without any supporting data or argument) is threatened by the advent of federal administrations giving "low priority" to civil rights issues. He recalls approvingly President Johnson's endorsement of affirmative action programs, and castigates the Nixon administration's proposed "benign neglect" doctrine (apparently unaware that the same man, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, was responsible for both.) Without quite saying so, and with no evidence to support the claim, Farley conveys

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the clear impression that Reagan administration policies threaten to undo some of the progress that he has so convincingly chronicled. Thus, he carefully maintains his usefulness to adherents of the "civil rights vision," even as he provides facts that undermine some of its basic tenets.

THIS ideological posturing is evident in Farley's treatment of Wilson's argument. First, he rejects Wilson's thesis on the basis of data that, to this reviewer, seem wholly consistent with it. Noting that polarization among blacks has increased in terms of occupational attainment, absolute incomes, labor force attachment, and frequency of families headed by women, he calls the evidence "mixed," since relative income and educational attainment have become more similar among blacks. But goods are bought with absolute, not relative dollars, and disparity in educational attainment is likely to be understated by omission of any measure of the quality of schooling. Second, he seems to trivialize the implications of class difference among blacks with the fatuous speculation that this growing schism may be "simply one stage [in the process] of assimilation." At a time when, in many big-city ghettos, two-thirds of black children are born out of wedlock, when many black high school graduates cannot read or speak the English language effectively, and when black residents face a risk of criminal victimization many times greater than whites, his suggestion is that increasing inequality among blacks only reflects the fact that some had to be the first to enjoy the fruits of assimilation! It is hardly surprising, then, that he believes giving "high priority" status to the agenda of civil rights advocates is what will be necessary to eradicate remaining racial inequality.

There is another defensible view of the matter—one wholly in line with the evidence Farley presents. This is the view that much of contemporary racial inequality will not go away until failures of family and community, so painfully evident in our inner cities today, are directly addressed. Addressing these failures requires that they first be acknowledged to exist, a task for which liberals like Farley clearly lack the stomach. But coming to grips with the social pathologies of the ghetto will also require an understanding that, whatever culpability white Americans may have for the history of racism, the responsibility for altering attitudes, values, and norms prevalent in black communities lies inescapably with blacks themselves.

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Sweden: Libertarianism on Rocky Soil

ELISABETH LANGBY

***Gunnar Heckscher:* The Welfare State and Beyond—Success and Problems in Scandinavia.** *University of Minnesota Press. 271 pp. $29.50 cloth, $12.95 paper.*

EVER SINCE Marquis Childs wrote *Sweden: The Middle Way* almost 40 years ago, reports from Sweden have been glowing. Once Europe's poorest, this ancient but peripheral country of only eight million became the richest in the world. With the newly gained wealth of the post-war era, a new species of nation was created: the modern welfare state. And from this novel political construct seemed to come all kinds of magical wonders affecting sex, death, peace, high-mindedness, equality, and beauty. While Volvo became the quintessence of quality in cars, Saab made the most advanced war planes, and Sweden became the world's second largest shipbuilder. Vilgot Sjoman let naked people behave both unashamedly and playfully in *I Am Curious Yellow*, Olof Palme became the magnanimous voice for every just cause, income differences virtually disappeared, and long-legged female Vikings raked in gold medals in Miss World contests. There was highbrow drama, too. Swedes committed suicide like crazy, and Ingmar Bergman, in the tradition of August Strindberg, gave the world the images of deepest darkness.

It seemed too good to be true. And it *was* too good to be true. At least it was too good to last forever. Ingmar Bergman has made his last movie; the Swedish state is borrowing for consumption just like the Third World countries; the moralism of Palme has lost its steam; free sex has become boring, and people are marrying again. Lean blonds are still blue-eyed and beautiful, but that is about it. It has even been pointed out that Sweden's exceptional suicide rate is probably not due to the sophisticated, high-strung, and profound Swedish soul, but to odd statistical definitions. Swedes are not even champions of the death wish anymore.

What once was a model country has now become a big question mark. It seems that the gigantic welfare state (70 percent of GNP flows through the public sector) is impossible to finance. State pension schemes, once sacrosanct, have been cut. Blue-collar workers have lost one-sixth of their real wages since 1976. Reports from Sweden these days are mostly about uncontrollable alcoholism and the inability to catch Soviet submarines.

It is therefore welcome that a senior Swedish statesman has written a thoughtful book on the crisis of the Swedish (and the general Scandinavian) experiment with the welfare state. Gunnar Heckscher's *The Welfare State and Beyond* presents the difficulties Sweden faces, and offers possible solutions. It is a "responsible" book by a respected member of the Swedish establishment. Yet, like many such books, it over-

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looks some recent intellectual and cultural developments that cast both the problems and solutions in a slightly different light.

THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS were brought home to me in a recent discussion with a popular Swedish talk show host. Like many young Swedish journalists, he is a former member and activist in the Swedish Communist Party, a tiny Maoist organization that has now passed out of existence, but used to dominate political debate. When I asked him about the future of the Swedish welfare state, he said: "Listen, we've got to build parallel structures. We have to stimulate private enterprise to provide alternatives to the public sector: schools, hospitals, child care, everything. We've got to get parallel structures to grow up so we then can dismantle the public ones! We've got to make the state superfluous! We should not just argue theoretically about limiting the power of the state, but also show how that is to be done in practice!" This man is just as excited about limiting government at the age of 38 as he was about extending state control over private enterprise when he was 23.

The talk show host is not alone in his libertarian views. Whenever you mingle with the Stockholm radical chic, you hear more anger directed against taxes, bureaucrats, and the suffocating quality of central planning than against capitalism. If you want your byline in the prestigious Swedish paper, your sure bet is to write on dismantling the state. This signifies a great change. The Swedish intelligentsia has been solidly collectivistic for as long as anybody can remember. It is hard to recall a single non-left voice that was taken seriously in the political and cultural arenas before 1980. Of course, there were politicians and editorial writers who called themselves conservatives, but they failed to constitute any alternative to the social democrats and Communists; they were just hesitant, 95 percent social democrats. But now the Swedish *Zeitgeist* has changed.

This is not to say that all leftists now believe in limited government. Olof Palme is still a socialist. But those who set the tone of the debate in the mid-1980s are libertarians. They seldom call themselves libertarians, but it is the proper label. If socialism is discussed at all, it is in the language of the obituary. Certainly there still are sociologists and political scientists at Stockholm University who are unrepentant critics of capitalism, but they are as far from the political center of gravity in Sweden as, for example, Michael Harrington is in the U.S.

THIS IS NOT an exclusively Swedish phenomenon. Throughout the industrialized world, and especially in Western Europe, the intellectual appeal of socialist thought seems to be fading. Marx fails to capture the minds of the young, and his disciples who were trained in the 1960s are now approaching middle age. "Reformist" socialism has also lost intellectual steam. The welfare system is not, as was once believed, the permanent solution to most social problems. It is also obvious to politically concerned Europeans today that the strong state

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does not—because it cannot—keep all its benevolent promises. Yet if Marx is dead in Western Europe, Hayek and Nozick are alive and well. And since Sweden is an extraordinarily homogenous country (if the tide is changing then everybody is swimming with it) the intellectual transformation there is more striking than perhaps anywhere else in Europe. We are now witnessing an anti-political awakening as the welfare state fails to achieve the safety and happiness Swedes expected. Social democracy does not fill the growing ethical vacuum Christianity left behind. The welfare state, which actually seemed to infuse meaning into Swedish life until it ran into economic difficulties a decade ago, no longer attracts. Instead, it has come to be seen as a black hole into which Sweden's riches and hopes disappeared. It is therefore not surprising that the novelty of libertarianism now appeals to the once rigidly collectivist intellectuals of Sweden, and indeed, of Western Europe as a whole. The left is tired, and libertarianism has a good chance of occupying the center stage of European political thinking as we approach the year 2000.

THINKING, yes. But what about the reality of practical politics? At least as far as Sweden is concerned, the future for state-reducing policies looks pretty gloomy. There seems to be little connection between what is said in speeches and essays, on the one hand, and what is happening in government. And it is not just a question of lag time; even if the politicians go on for decades praising limited government, Swedish political reality is unlikely to deviate from its collectivist path.

When a leading Swedish columnist was recently asked about the chances of libertarianism having any lasting impact, he explained, with a mournful sigh, that Swedes have an outstanding talent for absorbing everything into the political sphere, usually called the "public sector." "We can't think about anything without using political terms. I do so myself," he said, "although I know I shouldn't. Rules and regulations are rooted so deep down in the Swedish soul." He is right—it can be seen everywhere. A small example: A major magazine just ran a large survey under the title, "What do you know about kids? We asked the politicians, see if you can answer!" In any other country one might expect questions about child development, education, diet—even sex. But all these questions were of the type: "How many months is the [of course nationally universal] maternity leave with pay?" "How many crowns is the monthly child-allowance?" Not a single question had to do with the children themselves! An illustrious think-tank director was probably right when, asked about the possible impact of libertarian ideas, he said, "It is hard to change anything. We are talking and talking and talking, but the machinery of society is rushing towards more regulations and a stronger state."

There simply is no connection between the political philosophy debate, where libertarianism is almost unchallenged, and practical political plans. The libertarians who realize this are now confused and do not know what to do next. When the libertarians write essays on the

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virtue of liberty, they are pushing an open door; Olof Palme's administration has instituted a Liberty Department. Yet no organized force in Sweden, no party, no interest group, has formulated practical plans to reduce the power of the state.

And they probably never will. The reason is that the new enchantment with the idea of capitalism is one-sided. The Swedes like the benefits of the free market—economic growth, dynamism, upward mobility—but they do not like the contingency that is also part of an unfettered economy. More than anything else, Swedes like guarantees, systems where everybody can fit in equally well. They cannot stand failure, chaos, open-ended questions. As a Wall Street financial analyst said the other day, "They don't understand that to get the American Dream, they also have to take the American Nightmare. It all comes in the same package."

HECKSCHER'S BOOK gives the reader a good sense of how ingrained the welfare state is in the Swedish soul. Heckscher, who is in his eighties, is in many ways an ideal observer of the Swedish welfare system. He has not only been leader of the Conservative Party and ambassador to India and Japan, but also a professor of political science both in Sweden and in the U.S. He knows the Swedish political elite from within, but, since he is a conservative, feels free to criticize the welfare system. Heckscher is one of the most highly regarded thinkers in Sweden today, reason enough to take a serious look at his book.

Heckscher demonstrates that the development of the Swedish welfare state was never really controversial; conservatives and social democrats were in broad agreement from the outset. Heckscher represents this pragmatic, "responsible" Swedish way of doing politics that was as alien to the communism of 1968 as it now is to the libertarianism of 1985. (Both, incidentally, have been advocated largely by the same rebellious generation of baby-boomers.)

The Welfare State and Beyond is a solid, well-written textbook on the Scandinavian welfare states, their history, problems, and possible future. The strength of the book lies particularly in the first chapters, in which Heckscher carefully describes how well the idea of the welfare state fits into Scandinavian history; he points at the high degree of paternalism and lack of revolutionary social change as central features of Swedish society from the start. Unfortunately for the reader, Heckscher, like most Swedes, is rooted in the Germanic writing style, which appears rather plodding to the English-speaking world. Heckscher takes no risks. There are no leaps, no mockery, no dazzling hypotheses. The book is like Sweden herself: solid, honest, thorough, but incurious, and perhaps behind the times.

Elisabeth Langby is author of Vinter i valfardslandet (Winter in Welfare-Land, *Stockholm, 1984), a former editorial writer for* Svenska Dagbladet, *and a graduate student in political theory at Harvard.*

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Germany: The Untouchable Welfare State

MICHAEL GREVE

Claus Offe: **Contradictions of the Welfare State.** *MIT Press. 310 pp. $30.00 cloth, $12.50 paper.*

Renate Merklein: **Griff in die eigene Tasche** *(Pick Your Own Pocket). Rowohlt. 192 pp. DM 12.00.*

IN A COLLECTION of essays of rather mixed quality, the German sociologist and Habermas student Claus Offe tells the familiar story of the rise, success, and crisis of "social democracy." Offe argues at a level of abstraction that treats all advanced Western democracies as "welfare states." Notwithstanding the severe misgivings one may voice about an approach that lumps Sweden and the United States into the same category, Offe's volume does contribute to an understanding of post-war West German politics. The Federal Republic all but perfected social democracy, and will be one of the last countries to abandon it.

Social democracy—and here Offe's analysis, though rather conventional, is clear and succinct—is best understood as a combination of policies and institutions by means of which post-war democracies have sought to ensure mass loyalty without endangering the workings of a capitalist economy. Typically, the political systems of European social democracies are dominated by large, "catch-all" parties. These *Volksparteien* possess neither a class base nor a cohesive ideology. In order to win elections, they have to be centrist and pragmatic—a lesson the German Social Democrats learned during the 1950s.

The parties' success depends on their ability to satisfy popular and mostly economic demands—that is to say, to produce a Keynesian welfare state. The latter consists, first, of the welfare state proper, a system of income redistribution designed to insure the work force against the usual risks of life (illness, accidents, old age, unemployment), to provide a safety net for the poor, and, possibly, to promote equality. Second, the state seeks to smooth out business cycles, with the goal of arriving at steady but moderate growth. Frequently in Europe, the government will seek to draw business and labor into tripartite, "corporatist" agreements. These are in many ways the institutional core of social democracy, sustained by a pervasive ideology of "social partnership" which, in turn, is supposed to promote growth by avoiding disruptive behavior such as strikes and disinvestment. This mutual stimulation of peaceful social relations and economic growth is what Helmut Schmidt called *Modell Deutschland.*

DURING THE 1960s, academics displayed virtually unlimited confidence in the stability and efficiency of European social democracy and its welfare state. This changed in the second half of the 1970s. For one thing, it turned out that the system generated demands faster

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than it could satisfy them. This phenomenon was called "ungovernability," and it took the form of various social movements which asserted "underrepresented" interests and clamored for "alternative" means of political participation. The institutions responsible for the functioning of the welfare state were in effect criticized for doing their job too well. Powerful interest groups, labor not excluded, were said to exert undue influence; the bureaucracy was criticized for insensitivity and a maze of red tape. Naturally, the parties had to take most of the heat: They were accused of being overly entrenched, bureaucratic, and unresponsive to novel political demands. When parties possess a central role in the political system, as they do in West Germany, their inability to cope with new demands dangerously implies that dissatisfaction with particular policies might render parliamentary institutions themselves less legitimate. Characteristically, neither pollsters nor pundits could decide whether the Germans' *Verdrossenheit* (a kind of disgruntled mood) was directed against the state or the parties.

Germany has dealt surprisingly well with this threat. The established parties are struggling; but the party system as a whole has proved capable of accommodating "new" social movements such as the Greens. The parliamentarization of a rather radical movement with strong misgivings about representative government is, on the whole, a very encouraging sign of flexibility and the ability to cope with new demands.

THE SECOND REASON for reduced faith in the welfare state is that it ran out of money. Scores of theories try to explain why this is so, ranging from Marxist versions of the "fiscal crisis of the state," to frontal assaults on the Keynesian policies that are said to have caused slumping growth rates and runaway inflation. And, of course, there is the eminently plausible argument that the welfare state creates disincentives to work and to invest, thus undermining its own foundations. Offe accepts this argument:

> [T]he central problem on the labor market is the supply problem: how to hire and fire the right people at the right place with the right skills and, most important, the right motivation and the right wage demand. The welfare state is, in my view to a large extent justifiably, seen by business not as part of the solution, but rather as part of this problem itself.

Offe maintains that the conservative ideology (of "neo-laissez faire," as he calls it) is correct in what it asserts; but that it misses the main point:

> The embarrassing secret of the welfare state is that, while its impact upon capitalist accumulation may well become destructive (as the conservative analysis so emphatically demonstrates), its abolition would be plainly disruptive (a fact that is systematically ignored by the conservative critics). The contradiction is that while capitalism cannot coexist *with*, neither can it exist *without*, the welfare state.

Offe offers no empirical evidence for his categorical statement that capitalism cannot coexist with the welfare state—an assertion that, in

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the light of post-war history, borders on the bizarre. Offe believes it on the exclusively theoretical grounds that the welfare state has become an "irreversible structure" that cannot be rolled back—a rather strange statement now that the elimination of "structural rigidities" is all the rage in several Western countries.

For all that, there is no denying that Offe has a point. West Germany's economic situation, though not yet disastrous, is actually rather bad. The government prides itself on bringing down inflation, and it points out that the country has witnessed a recovery of sorts (a growth rate of little more than 2 percent). None of that has much to do with its policies. The American Federal Reserve Board's recent anti-inflationary course left the German Central Bank no choice but to follow suit, and the moderate growth that followed was caused overwhelmingly by the strong dollar which facilitates exports. No period of higher growth is in sight. Without it, the unemployment rate, now at an embarrassing 9 percent, is going to grow, as the government knows full well.

There can be little doubt that the effects of the wayward welfare state are at the root of Germany's economic problems. Most German economists are in fact of this opinion. Renate Merkleins's useful book, based on a series of articles in *Der Spiegel* (not exactly a right-wing journal), is the familiar story of staggering tax rates, pension and unemployment benefits sometimes exceeding wage levels, and legislation that makes it virtually impossible to fire (and hence hire) workers. Over the past decade, the average employee was allowed to keep only six out of every 100 additional dollars in nominal wages. He lost 56 dollars to inflation and 38 to increasing taxes and social security contributions. Since these figures do not even include the loss of substantial public benefits that are tied to nominal income levels, the average employee may well be worse off now than he was a decade ago. All the while, employers have to absorb higher wages; they also have to pay roughly half of all social security contributions.

POLITICIANS LEFT AND RIGHT know both that the welfare state cannot be financed without vigorous economic growth; and that the welfare state stands in the way of economic growth. Yet no large European democracy has done *less* than Germany has to eliminate structural rigidities. The present coalition government, having pledged to "turn the country around" and to reverse the trend towards ever-higher taxes and benefits, has done nothing of the sort. It says it wants to "consolidate" the budget and the welfare state. Thinking of these tasks exclusively in terms of distributing burdens, it pursues them by very limited cuts of a few benefits and by raising, once again, individual contributions to unemployment and old-age pension funds. The government has managed to institute a minuscule tax cut; however, it was an instrument of social, not economic policy. It is designed to encourage families to raise children, not to facilitate work and in-

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vestment. After the budget is consolidated, the government has promised, there will not be tax cuts, but there will be more welfare benefits.

The political will to do what is manifestly necessary—the will even socialist France has mustered—may be absent in Germany because the need for reform does not appear as urgent. Germany is a very wealthy country. It hardly knows poverty, and it can still finance, albeit awkwardly, its elaborate welfare state system. Evidently, people do not mind high taxes; there is no anti-tax movement worth mentioning.

This argument cuts both ways, though. Precisely because the country is so rich and its welfare state so extensive, reforms would be much less painful than in the United States, in Great Britain, or in France. One would also expect growth strategies to possess political appeal: The Germans used to take pride in their country's economic performance, and they can read the signs on the wall—lagging investment, decreasing competitiveness, more unemployment to come. There must be another reason for the government's reluctance to reform the welfare state.

AS OFFE EMPHASIZES, social democracy is an attempt to stabilize representative democracy by economic means. The need to do so has been particularly pressing in post-war Germany, and the country's inability to tackle the excesses of the welfare state has something to do with this fact. Germany lacks what other countries can take for granted: a stable tradition of liberal capitalism. Any conservative critique of the welfare state must depend on such a tradition. First, it is needed as a point of reference. It is the "model" Offe finds missing in conservative ideology, a program that produces not torchlight parades—fortunately—but landslide victories. Second, solid political traditions guarantee a fair amount of stability while the economic cure is administered.

Germany possesses no real tradition of liberal capitalism, on which a conservative attack on the welfare state could be based. The Christian Democrats sense that the real barrier to welfare state reform is not money but legitimacy. "The turn" they promised in 1983 had primarily moral and ideological connotations. Apart from a few routine references to the values of family, neighborhood, and individual dignity, though, the government has refrained from reasserting traditions for the purpose of political renewal.

The Christian Democrats' main source of strength, the tradition that could give the party a sense of purpose and direction, is their role in post-war reconstruction. The success of reconstruction, of course, had much to do with the rise of a capitalist economy. Unfortunately, though, the success of liberal capitalism *coincided* with the development of the welfare state. Hard as it is to roll back the latest entitlement program even in the United States, Americans can easily distinguish the Great Society from liberal capitalism. The Germans call their economic system a "social market economy," which indicates

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that they have a hard time separating the mechanisms that create growth from those that have to be financed, to sort out which mechanisms ultimately generated political stability. When today's Christian Democrats ask themselves why their predecessors were able to construct a remarkably stable democracy on the ruins of Nazism, the answer is mass prosperity. To them, that means the welfare state.

Moreover, every government that seeks a reversal of welfare state policies must possess faith in its country's political stability; the liberal tradition must be presumed to have some force of its own. The Christian Democrats, however, believe that West Germany's political stability rests *exclusively* on the welfare state. This lack of confidence is shared by the entire German political elite. Helmut Schmidt's persistent reminder that the Federal Republic constitutes the longest uninterrupted period of peace and prosperity, democracy, and freedom in German history exemplifies the pride of the founding generation; unmistakably, though, it also strikes chords of insecurity.

AS LONG AS the economic situation does not worsen dramatically, the Christian Democrats are therefore unlikely to take on the task of welfare state reform. It is hard to escape the conclusion that this is because the government has too little faith in the Federal Republic's political stability. It has firmly defended its foreign policies against radical opposition: One is hard-pressed to believe that domestic reform would require more courage. Why should welfare state reforms, if indeed they generate growth, result in massive social protest? After all, more than two million unemployed workers have more reason to take to the streets than do overpaid pensioners. Similarly, it seems unconvincing to assert that there is no majority for large-scale reforms. Christian-Democratic politicians who grew up under Konrad Adenauer should know better: There were no majorities for Western integration and a market economy when the great old man embarked on these courses.

The Federal Republic is renowned for its stunning post-war economic success. That legacy is now endangered by an overblown welfare state, but Germany is slower than most Western democracies to undertake the necessary reforms and to renew its commitment to vigorous growth as a strategy for both prosperity and political stability. This failure has less to do with a fancy sociological "contradiction" than with Germany's history and the lack of determination on the part of her governing elites.

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"Educational Reform" in Britain & France

RICHARD TOMLINSON

Better Schools: White Paper Presented to Parliament, March 1985. *Her Majesty's Stationery Office.*

Circulaires No. 85-009—85-015, January 1985. *Ministère de l'Education Nationale.*

Les principes fondamentaux de l'enseignement de l'avenir: Rapport présenté au Président de la République, March 1985. *Collège de France.*

AMERICANS are not alone in worrying about the way their children are educated. The education ministers of Britain and France, Sir Keith Joseph and Jean-Pierre Chevènement, have recently published major policy documents aimed at transforming the school system. The British initiative was released as a government White Paper (meaning a Cabinet-approved policy statement) in March 1985, under the title *Better Schools*. The French initiative was the result of several months' reflection by the minister, and is much more ambitious in scope. A series of ministerial decrees issued in early 1985 has already outlined the reforms that will take place in French primary education (ages 6-11) from next September. Further reforms are envisaged in the colleges (ages 11-16), in the lycées (ages 16-18), and eventually in the universities.

The French proposals have caused much more political controversy than their British counterpart, largely because Jean-Pierre Chevènement has far more power in his own country than Sir Keith Joseph has in Britain. Chevènement has absolute control over every aspect of the running of French schools. He can decree, for instance, how long a teacher may spend talking to a class at the beginning of a lesson (five minutes), and even how much water area a pupil should be allocated during swimming instruction.

The situation in Britain could not be more different. The Secretary of State for Education and Science—to give Sir Keith his proper title—has his authority curtailed in two ways. At a regional level he has to deal with the Local Education Authorities (LEAs), which are committees appointed by the county councils. About half the money for schools is raised from local taxes and administered by the LEAs, so they have considerable power to obstruct the secretary's wishes. This is particularly true in a Labour-controlled county like South Yorkshire, where the LEAs have a direct political interest in embarrassing the Tory minister. But even more potent checks on the minister are the headmasters and headmistresses, who have almost dictatorial authority within their schools. Their control over the curriculum is so great

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that the Education Ministry estimates nearly 19,000 syllabuses are being taught in English and Welsh schools alone. In fact, under the 1944 Education Act their only absolute obligation is to hold a daily religious assembly (an interesting contrast with the United States), though many schools have a very liberal interpretation of what this actually means.

THE DIFFERENCE between the French and British ministers' power is reflected in the tone of their policy statements. Where M. Chevènement dictates, Sir Keith merely suggests. Yet both ministers address the same overriding problem: how to adapt their education system to a society suffering mass unemployment, yet hoping to experience a technological revolution. The solution to this problem, according to both Joseph and Chevènement, lies in two areas: the acquisition of basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic), and, more important, the acquisition of skills relevant to an age of high technology.

It is also interesting to note that Sir Keith and M. Chevènement stand at opposite ends of the political spectrum. Chevènement is without doubt the most left-wing member of the present Socialist government. Within the Socialist Party he is the leader of the CERES faction, which has consistently tried to push the Mitterrand leadership in a more radical direction. In the past he has written books extolling Maoist theories, and has sought to adapt Marxist doctrine to "contemporary French reality." Sir Keith, by contrast, is one of the most right-leaning members of Mrs. Thatcher's administration. He was one of the first Conservative politicians to reject the corporate state that developed in Britain after the World War II, and on the critical issue of public expenditure was "Thatcherite" even before Mrs. Thatcher. The vast political gulf between Sir Keith and M. Chevènement makes the similarity of their conclusions about education all the more remarkable. Both men are convinced that, without a massive reform of their countries' education systems in the specific areas of basic and computer skills, Britain and France are condemned to the rank of second-class nations in the coming century.

THE MAJOR VICTIM of M. Chevènement's reforms has been the doctrine that schoolchildren should be encouraged to "learn to learn," that is, develop their own potential. On the contrary, he argues, the point of education is to acquire hard knowledge. If this involves returning to old-fashioned teaching methods, so be it. As he explained in an interview last January, "If one learns nothing, there is no chance that one will learn to learn .... What I discount completely is the view that the decline in educational standards can be 'resolved' by abandoning the necessary requirements of a sound education." In practical terms this means much more emphasis will in future be put on straightforward instruction leading to competitive exams, and much less on the child organizing his own education. The first stage of this process is the reforms being introduced in primary schools from

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September 1985. By the age of 11, children will be expected to understand basic grammar and to be able to read, write, and spell accurately. They will also be expected to understand the four key mathematical operations and the principles of simple geometry; have a grounding in astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, and biology; know the main events of French history; and be able to draw an accurate map of France, including the main towns, rivers, and mountains.

Chevènement's desire to make French primary education more competitive has provoked scathing criticism from his erstwhile supporters on the left. In an interview with *Le Monde* in November 1984 the Socialist trade union leader Edmond Maire accused Chevènement of seeking to create a two-tier system of education. Maire argued that the introduction of exams at such an early age, leading to a streaming of abilities, would victimize children from disadvantaged social backgrounds. The effect would be to create one form of education for the rich and another for the poor. Chevènement's response was swift and to the point. In an open letter to Maire he argued that, far from being reactionary, his reforms were actually in the best tradition of left-wing republicanism. According to Chevènement, a spuriously egalitarian education system is useless if it fails to provide children with the skills necessary to overcome their social handicaps.

Oddly enough, across the English Channel, the very conservative Sir Keith Joseph disagrees with M. Chevènement on the central issue of "learning to learn." According to *Better Schools:*

> The mistaken belief, once widely held, that a concentration on basic skills is by itself enough to improve achievement in literacy and numeracy has left its mark: many children are still given too little opportunity for work in the scientific, practical and aesthetic areas of the curriculum which increases not only their understanding within these areas but also their literacy and numeracy. In a majority of schools over-concentration on the practice of basic skills in literacy and numeracy unrelated to a context in which they are needed means that those skills are insufficiently extended and applied.

Unlike Chevènement, Sir Keith is convinced that the problem lies in not giving children enough opportunity to develop their potential:

> In about half of all classes much work in classrooms is so closely directed by the teacher that there is little opportunity either for oral discussion or for posing and solving practical problems. Pupils are given insufficient responsibility for pursuing their own enquiries and deciding now to tackle their work.

This divergence of opinion about the acquisition of basic skills may simply be a reflection of the different education systems in Britain and France. The paradox is that in France, where the system is heavily centralized, teachers have to conform to the government's pedagogical outlook, which, until Chevènement took over, stressed the importance of "learning to learn." But in Britain, where the system is decentralized, headteachers have the power to impose their own pedagogical

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theories on their pupils, which are often very traditional. In any case, Chevènement and Joseph are not in dispute about the importance of basic skills, only about the way in which they are acquired.

THE REASON such skills are important is obvious. In the crudest sense, they are the minimum qualification a young person possesses for future employment. But both the British and French ministers are aware that such a qualification cannot guarantee employment. In their opinion, schoolchildren will not be properly prepared for the outside world unless they receive adequate training in the use and application of high technology.

Both the British and French have taken this message to heart. In France the government has said it will supply 120,000 microcomputers to primary and secondary schools by the end of 1985. This project is being coordinated by the National Centre for Computer Technology, which has negotiated a contract with Thomson, the nationalized computer company. Its purpose is to familiarize a whole generation of French schoolchildren with every aspect of computer technology. President Mitterrand sees this as such an overriding priority that he has appointed a special Secretary of State for Technological Education, with a budget in 1985 of 335 million French francs (about $35 million). Chevènement has decided to upgrade the technical training colleges (*lycées d'enseignement professionnel*), which were formerly the poor cousins of the French secondary education system. He also insists that training in technology and the use of computers should be an integral part of a child's education from the earliest age. From September 1985 such training will be compulsory in the primary schools.

The effort to prepare British children for the age of high technology focuses on a major program called the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI). According to the White Paper, the purpose of this program is to offer

> coherent courses at schools and colleges leading to recognized national qualifications over a 4 year period. The TVEI embodies the Government's policy that education should better equip young people for working life. The courses are designed to cater equally for boys and girls across the whole ability range and with technical or vocational aspirations, and to offer in the compulsory years a broad general education with a strong technical element followed, post-16, by increasing vocational specialisation.

As this statement implies, the British government recognizes that a substantial minority of schoolchildren have nothing to gain from following a purely academic curriculum, and that much more should be done to train this minority in industrial and technological skills. So important is this task regarded that, since the program was established in 1983, £250 million has been spent on the TVEI, an enormous sum by British standards. Significantly, this money has not come from the

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education budget, but from funds provided by the Manpower Services Commission, which is attached to the Department of Employment. In this way the distinction between education and training for the workplace has been blurred, a process which the government regards as wholly desirable.

THE SAME OVERLAP between education and vocational training is encouraged by the French government. To this end, the French government has launched a national program to improve cooperation between the business world and educational institutions. In an interview in January 1985 the Secretary of State for Technological Education, Roland Carraz, declared:

> A wide-ranging enquiry is being organized to study, in particular, the reform of training diplomas, the development of educational programs in individual businesses, the sharing of resources by industry and schools . . . all of which is a very good example of what the business and educational worlds can do together.

Like the British, the French government is aiming at nothing less than a revolution in national culture. The French also share the British view that, despite the need for financial austerity, it is worth spending large amounts of money to achieve these goals. It is almost impossible to calculate the total cost of the French program, because the funds are disbursed through so many different channels. But to give one example: In addition to the 335 million French francs being spent on improved technological training, the French government plans to spend a further 500 million francs in 1985 to keep 60,000 young people at school learning industrial skills. All this money comes from an education budget that has risen to about 18 percent of total public expenditure.

Few people in France doubt that this is money well spent. In Britain the Labour opposition has tried to make an issue out of the government's decision to terminate various youth training schemes. But the Employment Minister, Tom King, maintains that these schemes did not provide adequate industrial training, and that they will be replaced by more effective programs. Indeed King has pledged that anyone leaving school at 16, and unable to find a job by December, will be enrolled in a training scheme for up to two years. A similar commitment has been made by the French Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, who wants to eliminate all school-leavers between the ages of 16 and 18 from the unemployment register by the end of 1985. The example which both the British and French governments cite is that of West Germany, where training schemes organized jointly by the state and industry continue for three years after the school-leaving age.

The problem with these training programs is not that they fail to ameliorate the employment prospects of young people, but that they are presented by the politicians as a real solution to this issue. This is simply untrue, as thousands of young people who have completed

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these programs, and are now unemployed, would confirm. For political reasons, both the British and the French governments have fallen victim to the need to prove that they are doing something about unemployment among young people, even though their economies are growing too sluggishly to create new jobs.

THE TRUTH is that many of the training schemes in Britain and France may be preparing young people for jobs that no longer exist. If the shape of the future is long periods of unemployment for a large section of the population, it might make more sense to give schoolchildren a good general education. This would at least avoid the deceit, intentional or accidental, of training them for "jobs" that may never materialize. In practical terms this would suggest turning away from the currently popular idea of education as a "training" for the adult world, and towards a view of education as something that justifies itself.

Ironically, a report published in April 1985 by the Collège de France on the state of French education, with the title, *Les principes fondamentaux de l'enseignement de l'avenir (Fundamental Principles of Future Education)*, made exactly this point. The report was commissioned by President Mitterrand in 1984, and is the product of a year's deliberation by France's most eminent academics. Its principal author is Pierre Bourdieu, who has been a professor of sociology at the Collège de France since 1982. Bourdieu argues that the educational system should be reorganized to allow people of any age to resume their studies or take new courses. He accepts that this will entail a corresponding change in the way people see the relationship between work and study:

> Though one does in fact see the gradual emergence of a class of worker-students and student-workers, the combination of work and study has not really been sanctioned by institutions. This is undoubtedly because that would suppose a complete re-thinking the concept of work and the opposition between inactivity and work, at the heart of which one would have to include the question of professional training.

The crux of the matter, according to Bourdieu, is that the French can no longer reasonably expect to be employed in the same job for their entire working life. They will therefore need to return periodically to college or university to retrain for a new job. In addition, the long-term unemployed will require education as a resource to keep them occupied.

None of what Bourdieu says invalidates the efforts being made by the French education minister and his colleagues to improve technical training among the young. Nor indeed does it invalidate the similar efforts being made by the British education minister across the Channel. But the Collège de France report does imply that, in seeking to make school education a better preparation for society, both Sir Keith and M. Chevènement are in danger of achieving exactly the opposite.

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Their mistake is to present their reform measures on the assumption that these will achieve full employment. It certainly makes sense to train schoolchildren from the earliest age in the use of computers and high technology, provided one recognizes that this is no guarantee of future work. Computer skills can only improve a young person's "employability," not ensure it. A more balanced view of technological training is to regard it in the same light as the acquisition of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. That basic skills are a minimal qualification for employment is obvious. What should be added, however, is that such skills are also a minimal requirement for a rewarding life, since without them the individual is effectively cut off from society. The same may also be true in the future of high-tech skills, though it would be wrong to stretch the parallel too far. It is certainly true that technological training will apply as much to the expanding world of leisure as to the contracting world of work.

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Japan: The Legal Roots of Labor Peace

ARTHUR N. WALDRON

***William B. Gould:* Japan's Reshaping of American Labor Law.** *The MIT Press. 193 pp. $19.95.*

LABOR RELATIONS in Japan are not always as smooth as admirers of the Japanese economic miracle might think. On April 24, 1973, for instance, thousands of angry commuters rioted at 38 Tokyo metropolitan subway and railroad stations to protest an illegal work stoppage by transport unions. Threats of violence against managers, obstructive picketing, the "hitting of large drums and gongs very close to department and section chiefs... to the extent of causing fainting spells and breathlessness"—all clearly illegal techniques in the United States—are regularly employed in Japanese strikes. The high noon of such violent confrontation occurred almost 40 years ago, in February of 1946, when a general strike against both government and management "led by public-sector unions (in cooperation with the Japanese Communist party)" probably would have succeeded had not General MacArthur intervened to stop it.

Yet today there can be no question that one of the most important reasons for the world-wide success of Japanese business is the cooperative relationship between labor and management, which clearly benefits both. Days lost to strikes in Japan were just over three million in 1976, while in the United States the comparable figure was 38 million. In certain industries—among them automobiles, steel, shipbuilding,

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and rubber—"no kind of strike or industrial action has been heard of since at least the 1950s." Grievances are far fewer: On average 30 times as many cases have been filed before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in the U.S. than before its Japanese counterpart, the Labor Relations Commission. The avoidance of legal and administrative processes to resolve grievances is further reflected in the numbers of lawyers in the two countries: 15,000 in Japan versus half a million in the United States. Everyone in Japan benefits from this arrangement—workers, management, and the general public—just as in the West everyone suffers from such self-destructive actions as the recent British coal miners' strike.

HOWEVER, the underlying tradition of violence in Japanese industrial relations should alert us to the fact that Japan's success cannot be explained fully by alleged cultural proclivities toward cooperation or by traditions of loyalty that go back to the time of the samurai—the sorts of factors that one frequently hears proposed, not least by Japanese themselves. Rather, like Japan's post-war successful adoption of democracy, which built on foundations laid in the 1920s, her success in solving labor-management problems is the outcome of a complex process of fostering some traditions from her past while attempting to discard others.

Because it is organized topically, Gould's book does not address this process directly. Rather, it compares the state of Japanese and American labor law today and shows that, although the Japanese system rests on a statutory foundation introduced during the Occupation, it has nevertheless come to differ from our own in many significant and efficiency-enhancing ways. Gould does devote some attention to explaining how these differences arose. Thus, besides providing a fine summary of the two countries' current laws, his book sheds some indirect light on the general process of developing Japanese policy, one that has led to a situation arguably preferable to that in the United States.

The Japanese process, it should be noted, began with a decisive defeat for organized labor. The immediate post-war period had seen a rapid rise in the number of union members in Japan, the direct result of General MacArthur's policy of "encouragement of the unionization of labor," one of the "reforms in the social order of Japan" that American architects of Occupation policy believed had to be carried out if the roots of militarism were to be destroyed. But the newly-powerful unions, under strong left-wing influence, very nearly brought the country to chaos. Unrest in the over-manned, uneconomic heavy industries left over from the wartime economy, and in the state-run transportation sector, led to the abortive general strike, its countermanding, and, in elections two months later, the defeat of the conservative pre-war democrat Yoshida Shigeru and the advent of a socialist government. That government's ineptitude brought Yoshida back a year later, and he returned—like his Liberal Democratic Party successors to this day—owing nothing to organized labor.

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So "big labor" as we know it in the West simply has not existed in Japan since the immediate post-war period. Unions are frozen out of government. They are furthermore divided among themselves, and, rather than uniting behind a single opposition party, have diffused their support among several. This situation has permitted government and industry to concentrate together on economic efficiency and the creation of wealth. But the defeat of organized labor in the 1950s has not left Japanese workers in limbo. Over the last 30 years, active fostering of unions—at the company, not the craft or the industry, level—and stress on consultation and cooperation between labor and management, have left Japanese labor highly unionized, rapidly prospering, and intimately involved in the management of business. This looks like a good outcome: Yet, ironically, it appears to be the consequence of what, by American standards, is "weak" labor law.

GOULD NOTES that while Japanese labor-management relations are cooperative, those in America are adversarial—in part because of American labor legislation. Originating in the New Deal period, American labor law reflected the commonplaces of the time: that labor and capital had different and antagonistic interests, and that labor's needed more protection. The precise definitions of bargaining units, the doctrine of exclusive representation by a single union, and of its choice by a majority vote of workers—keys to the U.S. system, and all absent in Japan—are all the products of statutes. And those statutes in turn embody the social thinking of their time—a time before foreign competition from Japan and the New Industrializing Countries like South Korea and Taiwan irrevocably changed the structure of the American economy. "In the United States," Gould writes, "the NLRB played a decisive role in determining the existence of industrial units and thus the place of industrial unions in labor-management relationships."

In Japan, by contrast, the practices of labor-management relations received their form after the war, at a time when the attention of the country was focused on the single goal of attaining the kind of rapid growth through international trade which alone could solve the problems of poverty that menaced their society. Yoshida first sketched out the goals later made explicit by Prime Minister Ikeda's 1960 announcement of the "income doubling policy." In pursuit of such goals (quickly achieved), Japanese government and industry sought to discover the most serviceable arrangements and tailored laws to fit them. As a result, Gould points out, Japanese labor law "had a peripheral impact on the contours of the trade-union movement." The causation was the other way around: What solved problems was put into law.

The best fit, it turned out, was not a nineteenth-century Dickensian approach, with workers hired and fired at every market fluctuation, management by management alone, and sweat-shop production practices. Rather, it was a model that combined considerable government and management solicitude for labor (lifetime employment for

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some workers, for example) with an insistence that workers and their representatives be involved in every facet of the production process, from corporate strategy (former union leaders regularly turned up in management) to decisions about production and methods of quality control. The system is easily romanticized: As Gould points out, in hard times it can be as seemingly harsh as anything in the West, with small industrial subcontractors in particular having to lay off large numbers of workers while the employees of large companies keep their jobs. Nevertheless, cooperation and co-responsibility clearly underlie the Japanese system, and receive legal sanction.

THIS IS A MARKED CONTRAST to the situation in the United States. Organized labor in America has sought to avoid becoming embroiled in the problems of individual firms. It has sought to remove itself from "competition between companies and plants"—and from international competition, one might add today. Industry unions are too broad, and craft unions too narrow, to be able to cooperate with the units upon which their livelihoods ultimately depend, the individual firms that compete in the marketplace. Just as many American politicians have traditionally worried about how to distribute wealth without showing much concern for its creation, so American labor has been traditionally disinclined to worry about the long-term health and welfare of industry, and has concentrated instead on immediate issues of wages and benefits for its members. As long as American firms could pass increased labor costs along to consumers without losing market share, this approach seemed to work well. But it can no longer succeed today: International competition has seen to that. We now face the challenge of remaking our system of labor-management relations in a way that will permit us to compete effectively, and to win, in the new international economy.

For the general reader, perhaps the most interesting point to emerge from Gould's rather technical book is that many of the measures we arguably should take are, at present, questionable under our own labor law. Founded on an adversarial model, our law virtually guarantees that, as Justice William Brennan wrote in the Supreme Court decision in *NLRB* v. *Insurance Agents* (1959), "The parties ... proceed from contrary and to an extent antagonistic viewpoints and concepts of self interest." Legally-defined procedures pit labor and management against each other, and even when they reach an agreement the NLRB may refuse to sanction what it sees as overly compromising. Gould mentions the decision in *NLRB* v. *Community/Medical Services of Clearfield, Inc.* (1978), where the Board argued that it should not "rubber-stamp inadequate settlement agreements" even if both sides favor them, and he mentions with approval the dissent, which deplored "litigation for litigation's sake."

Gould points out many other places where American law, with its adversarial assumptions, undermines attempts to adjust labor-management relations to meet the pressing needs of the contemporary

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economy. While supervisors and managers are commonly members of Japanese unions, they are excluded from the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act in the United States, a fact "predicated on the assumption that the supervisor-employee relationship is necessarily adversarial because supervisors represent management." American unions concur in this sort of separation: They would be unlikely, for example, "to welcome or applaud the promotion of union leaders to top management," though in Japan one out of six company directors was once a union leader.

AMERICAN LAW also can discourage the sort of sharing of economic information (and thus of responsibility for the long-term health of the company) that is common in Japan. "Unions and workers must be in a position to know the economic facts of life and thus to bargain intelligently" notes Gould, and he cites with approval both European attempts at "co-determination" and Japanese sharing of economic data. "Yet American labor is counterproductive in this respect." The decision in *NLRB* v. *Truitt Manufacturing* (1956) obligated an employer to open its books "only where it pleaded an inability to pay the union." Real problem solving, Gould argues, "is avoided by employers who view the firm simply as their own property and characterize its internal affairs as none of the concern of the union and the workers." Likewise, the Supreme Court, in *First National Maintenance Corp.* v. *NLRB* (1981), rejected "the concept of partnership and parity between labor and management." But how, asks Gould, "can society expect the unions to be trustworthy and loyal when it seems unalterably opposed to union involvement? How can a union be convinced to negotiate reverse cost-of-living adjustments ... or profit sharing ... when it is not involved in acquisition decisions in a new industry? It is in this critical area of trust and confidence that the Japanese have been able to focus on the peculiarities of firms and inspire loyalty."

Yet another example of the law's perverse working is found in the informal organization of workers in non-union plants. In Japan company unions regularly receive financial support from, and access to facilities owned by, their companies. Both would be illegal or doubtful in the United States. Yet, asks Gould, "where the plant is unorganized, why should the law [with its rigid categories] condemn employee groups, which enhance communications, to be defined as 'labor organizations,' and thus prevent the company to assist them? With almost 80 percent of American workers unorganized, it is inevitable that worker participation programs will be developed with or without unionism." Unions should learn to work within this new framework.

MANY AMERICANS, particularly those who strongly favor the rights of individuals, free competition, and free trade, will likely be very suspicious of the general tenor of Gould's commentary, which calls for more union involvement in the affairs of industry. Even today most Americans are nowhere near so agreed on the goal of economic

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growth as are the Japanese, and we tend to cling to our adversarial assumptions and the suspicions that flow from them. Unwilling to accept real responsibility for the health of an industry, American unions have chosen repeatedly to close down plants and export their own present and future jobs rather than make necessary economic concessions. And management, rather than risk capture by such irresponsible unions, has repeatedly opted for keeping the union out, or for locating new productive capacity beyond its reach—often overseas. The net result, as we are acutely aware, is joblessness, loss of international competitiveness, and rising imports.

Clearly we have to change, but there is no quick fix. Some Americans, admiring the success of Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) have called for an "industrial policy" for the United States. But who can doubt that such a policy, if implemented here, would turn out to be a counterproductive transfer of resources "from the sunbelt to the rustbelt," as Chalmers Johnson has put it, rather than the effective promoter of emerging industries that it has been in Japan? Similarly, one may wonder whether Gould's recommended reforms, which are based on Japanese experience, would not simply strengthen labor even more, without imbuing it with the kind of long-term sense of responsibility that Japanese industrial structures impose. At present, organized labor in the United States is undergoing a kind of slow-motion defeat, visible both in its increasing inability to organize leading industries, and in the gradual eclipse of its political influence. This defeat may be analogous to the rather more decisive defeat suffered by Japanese organized labor in the 1940s and 1950s, one whose significance Gould seems not fully to appreciate. In Japan that defeat was the prerequisite for the adoption of new ways of thinking and of new institutions that benefited all, and workers not least.

BUT CAN WE abandon the adversarial assumptions that guide much of our economic thinking, and provide the rationale for much of our law and decision making? This will take some doing, for, like their forerunners in nineteenth-century labor and reform movements, many contemporary observers still believe that humane values and the demands of economic efficiency are unalterably opposed. Commenting on the recent British miners' strike for the *New York Times*, the respected British journalist Peter Jenkins expressed this view clearly. "The past," he wrote, "had challenged the present and lost."

> Old values of community and mutuality had made their forlorn stand against the new values of market economics. The once crack troops of organized labor, the Brigade of Guards of the working class, had made their last stand. The struggle was futile and thus tragic. The miners' strike was the ending, not the beginning, of something.

Yet the lesson of Japanese labor relations is quite the opposite. "Community and mutuality" have scarcely been turned away at the doors of Japan's factories, by most indices the world's most modern.

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Rather, stress on such values, and their conscious fostering, would appear to have been among the essentials in Japan's success story. It is in the West that the door has been unwittingly barred—by the labor and management attitudes already mentioned, and by the sanctions of law which, based on experience now obsolete, have ensured the perpetuation of adversarial patterns into a new period where they are clearly inappropriate. Gould shows how the Japanese have modified American labor law to serve the needs of their modern economy. They have also modified other American imports—patents, educational concepts, and techniques of quality control, to mention but a few—to the same end. Now that we are beginning to share their economic goals, there is no reason that we ought not to be able to modify labor laws at least as effectively as the Japanese have.

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Great Britain: The Negative Income Tax Rediscovered

LESLIE LENKOWSKY

A. W. Dilmot, J.A. Kay, and C.N. Morris: **The Reform of Social Security.** *Clarendon Press. 128 pp. $18.95 cloth, $7.50 paper.*

TWO DECADES AGO, few proposed public policies looked more attractive and more likely to succeed than the negative income tax. Indeed, as the 1960s ended, a dozen major countries and an OECD working group were considering it. The president of the United States had put forth a version of it as his foremost domestic priority, and the prime minister of Great Britain was about to do the same. Support for it could be found among liberals as well as conservatives, and it enjoyed the near-unanimous acclaim of economists, a group whose views on such matters were still being taken seriously. Apart from a few old-line "welfarists" on the left and rugged individualists on the right, the prospect of replacing the costly, complicated network of social insurance and public assistance programs found in every welfare state with a simple, efficient, broadly acceptable device for providing help to the poor through the tax system seemed to have an irresistible appeal.

Yet by the end of the 1970s the idea appeared to be virtually dead. In the United States, two presidents had tried to win approval of it; each had failed, with both of them losing considerable political capital in the process. The plans were first stalled in Britain, then abandoned entirely when the government of Prime Minister Edward Heath was

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defeated, and his successors showed no inclination to resurrect them. Elsewhere, even less progress was made.

What had seemed like a sensible notion in theory turned out to have a number of practical difficulties. Foremost among them was the apparent impossibility of designing a negative income tax that would substantially eliminate the existing system of benefits and reduce poverty without also adding significantly to government spending. The reason is simple: There are large numbers of people who are poor, or nearly poor, but not "needy," and who are excluded (or who exclude themselves) from current entitlements. The negative income tax sweeps them all into the fold. Furthermore, those who had grown accustomed to the existing arrangements, either as providers or recipients, constituted a formidable lobby against wholesale change. So intractable were these problems that not only politicians gave up on the idea. Eventually, many of its academic proponents did as well.

HENCE, it is remarkable to find this new report from Britain's respected Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) advocating a version of the negative income tax once again. Even more remarkable, its authors claim the proposal can provide significant aid to the poor while *reducing* taxes for almost everyone else. Although a number of questions still remain, the IFS study suggests that the widespread presumption of the negative income tax's demise may have been greatly exaggerated.

Part of the reason is that while the idea was being consigned to the policy graveyard, the problems it sought to remedy have persisted. In particular, as the IFS report demonstrates, the existing set of social insurance and welfare programs continues to be inefficient and hard to justify rationally. "Britain's social security," write authors A. W. Dilmot, J. A. Kay, and C. N. Morris, "is like a patchwork quilt falling apart at the seams." The dozens of benefits available add up to an administrative nightmare, with operating costs consuming a large share of total expenditures. Even so, many of the poor do not get the assistance they need (and to which they may be entitled), while many people who are not needy obtain considerable help, usually through social insurance programs. Moreover, because of the unplanned way in which welfare benefits overlap the tax system, large numbers of Britons face marginal tax rates that discourage them from working. Once an object of national pride and international imitation, Britain's welfare state is today, according to the IFS team, an object of "severe public disrepute."

No one seems to know what to do about this. In Britain (as in the United States), the currently fashionable approach is to rely on administrative reforms. Yet while these may slightly reduce costs and the number of recipients, they do nothing about the multiplicity of programs and rules that are often the real causes of waste and inefficiency.

Short of abolishing the welfare state entirely, only the negative income tax offers a plan for thoroughgoing change. It would do so by ending the traditional practice of making benefits contingent upon

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criteria other than income. In Britain, as well as other countries, most of the social programs require a person to have either a record of financial contributions to the program or a specific condition (such as unemployment or disability) that warrants help. Merely lacking an adequate income is enough only for catch-all public assistance programs (and sometimes, as in the United States, not even then). That is why there are so many different kinds of aid, each defining the needy in a different way. Under a negative income tax, only income would matter. Through the same means government now uses to determine who pays, it could also ascertain who would receive benefits. Just as deductions reduce the amount of income liable for tax, "refunds" could increase the income of those too poor to owe anything. With an integrated system, rates could also be set to reduce disincentives to work or save. Obtaining aid would be as automatic and predictable as paying taxes, and just as acceptable. For the needy and those who were not, there would be just one program with one set of rules.

THESE WERE ALWAYS the attractions of the negative income tax, and the IFS study is a reminder that they remain so today. What proved its undoing, however, was the problem of providing enough assistance for someone with no income without simultaneously giving large tax breaks to those who were not "needy." It is easy to construct a negative income tax for those with low incomes. But what about those who have incomes just below the poverty line? Simply to give them the same tax credit would cost far more than necessary to reduce poverty, but curtailing the credit sharply might dampen incentives to work.

The IFS team tries to show that this need not be the inevitable result. To do this, they have created a negative income tax that relies on not one credit (as was the case with most previous plans) but two. The first would offset tax liability; the second would replace welfare benefits. The amounts of each need not be identical and would depend upon employment status, household size, and similar circumstances usually known to tax collectors. As earnings or other income increased, each credit would also decline in value, though not necessarily at the same rate. A household would get no advantage from the tax credit unless its income were high enough to require a tax payment. By the same token, it would realize nothing from the benefit credit once its income passed the poverty line, or some other acceptable standard. By appropriately setting the amount of the credits and tax rates, the IFS authors demonstrate that their simpler system can come close to duplicating the distribution of incomes under the existing tangle of programs, yet not cost additional money. Moreover, incentives to work remain about as good (or as bad) as they currently are.

With further adjustments to concentrate benefits on the needy at the expense of the somewhat less needy, the new system can produce even more striking results. Over £10 billion at 1983-84 prices could be saved without causing additional hardship for the poor, allowing either a tax reduction of seven or eight points, or if all the money were

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used to increase benefits, the virtual elimination of poverty in Britain. Dividing the savings between tax cuts and more aid would still lower the number of poor by more than one third. And for most working-age Britons, this alternative would also reduce marginal tax rates.

Unavoidably, the new plan involves some redistribution of income. Pensioners and large families with only one parent working would gain at the expense of other types of households and within all types, the poor would gain at the expense of the rich. Overall, incentives to work or save do worsen, especially for retirees. Yet the size of these shifts appears relatively small. For example, though average marginal tax rates would go from 30.9 to 54 percent for the elderly, the increase would be from 40.7 to 44.1 percent for people below retirement age. Furthermore, while the loss of child benefits or tax allowances for the elderly reduces the income of the better-off, all but pensioners and large families would recoup much of it by paying lower taxes. Even these consequences could be easily mitigated either by changing the amount of the credits and tax rates or by increasing total spending.

ALL THIS SEEMS too good to be true. So accepted is the idea that designing a feasible negative income tax is like squaring the circle that the IFS proposal automatically arouses suspicion. In fact, there are two features that make it appear to work better than it would in reality.

The first is that the IFS study takes no account of labor force effects of the plan. The negative income tax experiments conducted in the United States during the 1970s not only showed that low-paid workers would reduce their working hours if given additional income, but also that the cost of this response could be quite large, with perhaps as much as half the total spending going to replace money that otherwise would have been earned. This was especially true for the secondary earners in a household—wives and older children. Under the IFS proposal, families with more than one worker would be treated less advantageously than those with only one. If many of these secondary earners (or others) find it beneficial to work less because public aid is greater, the IFS version of the negative income tax could become as wasteful and ineffective as what it replaces.

In any case, the IFS proposal does not eliminate the need for other welfare programs. Even if all the savings from ending benefits and tax allowances for the better-off were given to the poor (and no decline in work effort occurred), over 400,000 British households would still require public assistance to reach the poverty line. Under the preferred option of splitting the savings between higher benefits and lower taxes, some 2,000,000 households would need additional help. Most of these would consist of pensioners or others without much money of their own; in other words, even the IFS version of the negative income tax cannot pay a sufficient amount to the household with almost no income without giving too much to the one that is still poor, but better-off. As a result, special programs will always be necessary for those

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households with what the IFS authors term "exceptional needs," and to that extent the ideal of a simple and efficient welfare state will remain out of reach.

Perhaps more important, adopting a negative income tax would also entail a serious political problem. Rationalizing a complex system of benefits and taxes may make sense to an economist, but to a politician it makes income redistribution too obvious. Why should money be taken from larger, but better-off families and given to smaller, but poorer ones? How just is it for the elderly who saved for their retirement to be required to support their contemporaries who did not? The existing welfare programs are at least built upon some accepted—albeit imperfect and occasionally fallacious—tests of deservingness; the negative income tax would do away with them and rely only on need. Even if the idea did not still suffer from the political wounds of the last decade's debates, the IFS proposal would have to overcome the long-standing belief that this way of allocating aid is not fair and may harm the long-run interests of society.

NOTHING BETTER illustrates the difficulty of doing this than the issue which helped defeat Prime Minister Heath's version of the negative income tax in 1974. In Britain, unlike other countries, family allowances were paid directly to mothers in the form of coupons, redeemable at local post offices. Thus, when the Heath government proposed to replace them and other benefits with a refundable tax credit (similar to the IFS benefit credit), the classic political problem arose: "Who gets what?" The logic of the plan suggested that the credit should be applied against the income of whichever member of the household worked—usually the father. The politics wound up dictating otherwise. A bipartisan, nationwide campaign was launched, aimed at establishing the point that the proposed change was unfair to mothers and would deprive them of an independent source of income upon which the well-being of the British child depended. In fact, the value of the credit had been set so that all families were to be better-off, but no matter. A social interest larger than rationalizing the welfare state was thought to be at stake, and ultimately the Heath government was forced to modify its plan.

Proposals for a negative income tax will always produce this sort of controversy. Regarding their own version, the IFS authors admit that "it is difficult to decide which member of the family unit should receive the benefit." Although they would prefer to give it to the working members, they acknowledge that something may have to go directly to mothers at home. This is undoubtedly a prudent position, but it still suggests that the issue is only an administrative one. But the real trouble is that the welfare state is not, and never has been, a device merely for helping the poor. Rather, it is a vehicle for asserting social claims. These claims, in turn, become politically controversial, since a welfare program is always "discriminating" for someone and against someone, and resists "rationalization."

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This is as true for the Thatcher government as for its predecessors. Its major effort to reform the welfare state, outlined this June, rejected the negative income tax in favor of a series of largely administrative changes to the existing programs. A costly earnings-related pension plan, enacted by the last Labour government, was partially eliminated, but only to be replaced by a new scheme. As *The Economist* put it, of the £40 billion spent annually on social security programs, the Thatcher government, "after an extensive review... is not certain whether [it] is going to cut that huge spending by a single net penny soon."

"The best is frequently the enemy of the good," the designers of the IFS plan write. Another way of putting it is that the "best," from an abstract economic point of view, is often the enemy of the "good," from a political point of view. And if there is a welfare state that can consistently give economics priority over politics, we have yet to see it.

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Can "Rights" Reform Social Policy?

THOMAS J. MAIN

Richard E. Morgan: **Disabling America: The "Rights Industry" in Our Time.** *Basic Books. 245 pp. $16.95*

David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman: **The Willowbrook Wars: A Decade of Struggle for Social Justice.** *Harper & Row. 405 pp. $27.95.*

SOCIAL REFORM conceived by activist lawyers and undertaken through the courts has been with us for the last 20 years. Mental health policy has been radically changed by such newly discovered legal principles as "the right to treatment" and "the right to the least restrictive environment." The management of schools, prisons, and homes for the mentally retarded has experienced similar, radical changes through court action.

The performance of all these institutions has become the subject of major public debate and the target of powerful political movements. What is now called the "mediocrity" of our schools has spawned the "excellence movement"; the increasingly visible problem of the homeless has led to renewed concern over the wisdom of current mental health policy and over the acceptability of large-scale mental institutions; concern over crime and the ability of incarceration to reduce it are leading to a reevaluation of prisons as well. In such political envi-

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ronment, one would expect several questions to receive special attention. First, to what extent is the current unsatisfactory state of these recently reformed institutions the result of the legalistic, rights-oriented approach the courts have taken? Second, if court-sponsored reform does indeed cause important problems, what accounts for its continued popularity among activists? And, finally, what alternative approach to reform remains for those who wish to improve the performance of these troubled institutions?

For whatever reason, not much has been written on these questions—at least, not as much as deserves to be written. However, two recent books—*Disabling America: The "Rights Industry" in Our Time* by Richard E. Morgan, and *The Willowbrook Wars: A Decade of Struggle for Social Justice* by David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman—do directly address the issue of court-sponsored social reform. Both are useful, even if the answers they suggest are ultimately unsatisfactory.

MORGAN AND THE ROTHMANS take very different approaches to the issue of court-sponsored reform of public institutions, and they arrive at very different conclusions. Morgan's thesis is that by attempting to reform American institutions through "creating new rights with unreflective enthusiasm, activist lawyers and their allies have marginally disabled major American institutions, both governmental and private." Morgan attempts to substantiate this charge by examining a very diverse group of social issues that have been dealt with, in different degrees, through the courts. These include church/state issues, and policies regarding education, law enforcement, and order maintenance.

Unfortunately, the organization of Morgan's book makes it very difficult for him to document his thesis. By jumping from one subject to another, Morgan gives only a superficial treatment of each one. As a result, he only has time to evaluate the legal arguments that activist lawyers and judges bring to bear in each case. Morgan does this well, but unfortunately does not go on to demonstrate that, in fact, rights-oriented reform has had the pernicious consequences he claims. For example, in the chapter entitled "Undermining Order Maintenance," Morgan quite effectively criticizes court decisions that have made it more difficult for police to stop and question suspicious characters. He then takes it for granted that these decisions have impaired order maintenance. One is inclined to agree that they probably did, but Morgan offers no proof—a typical failure of the book.

Neither does Morgan fare well in his analysis of the attractiveness of rights-oriented reform, if indeed its results are as negative as he claims. Morgan presents a variation on the theory of the "new class." He sees the discovery of rights and the enthusiasm for unending reform as a political tactic of what he calls "the talking class," which "can use its verbal skills to delegitimatize nonintellectual elites; and . . . seek to extend its imperium by insisting on evermore intellectualized decision

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making in all aspects of activity . . . [thus] shifting power and, eventually, money and prestige in the direction of those who will police the verbal manipulating." Morgan is probably correct in saying that these rights activists seek to delegitimatize traditional political institutions. But whether they are primarily motivated by sheer self-interest is far from clear.

THE WILLOWBROOK WARS is a very different sort of book. Rather than give a synoptic account of various court-sponsored reform movements, the Rothmans focus closely on a single case: the attempt to improve the lives of the residents of the Willowbrook institution for mentally retarded children in New York City. The book begins in 1972, when a reporter for ABC television, Geraldo Rivera, aired a documentary on the miserable condition of the children in Willowbrook; it ends in 1982, when, as a result of a lawsuit brought against New York State's Department of Mental Hygiene (DMH), nearly half of Willowbrook's residents had been transferred to smaller, supposedly better-run, residences "in the community." A good part of the book is an account of the lawsuit brought against DMH by Bruce Ennis, a lawyer with the New York Civil Liberties Union, on behalf of (among others) the parents of the children in Willowbrook. As the Rothmans make very clear, Ennis's goal was *not* to improve conditions at Willowbrook, but to establish that Willowbrook's residents had a "right to treatment" that could only be realized by closing down Willowbrook altogether and placing its clients in "community based" facilities. Although the judge in the case, Orin Judd, did not at first uphold such a right, he did eventually hold that the residents had a "right to protection from harm," and he did issue a preliminary injunction ordering Willowbrook to improve its conditions. After a year, Ennis felt Willowbrook had made unsatisfactory progress, so he brought DMH back to court. This time a consent decree was obtained, in which DMH promised to return many Willowbrook residents "to the community" as soon as possible. A review panel was empowered to report to the court on the progress DMH made in this regard. So although Willowbrook was never entirely closed down, it did prove possible to relocate nearly half of its residents to other surroundings.

The Rothmans take the Willowbrook history to demonstrate that, in some cases at least, rights-oriented reform through the courts can be successful. They claim that "indeed, future debates on the proper role of the judiciary will have to reckon with the fact that the court was equal to the task of institutional reform." But there are several reasons why one might want to take issue with this judgment. First, whatever one thinks about the Willowbrook outcome, it might be a bad model for the reform of other institutions, such as adult mental health institutions and prisons. Retarded children engage our sympathy more than prisoners or even mentally ill adults do. Further, while the inmates of prisons and mental institutions often have only tenuous associations

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with people outside those institutions, retarded children usually have parents who will take necessary action on their behalf. It therefore follows that the reformers of Willowbrook had considerable political force outside the court, including parents, various benevolent organizations and charities, the media, and ultimately the administration of then-governor Hugh Carey. As one reads this book, it sometimes seems that these groups had as great an impact on improving Willowbrook conditions as did the court and the activist lawyers. In situations where support from these other groups is less forthcoming, it may very well be that court-directed reform will be much less successful.

IN FACT, a good deal of the Rothmans' history belies their sanguine judgment of the overall benefit of the court-sponsored reform. For example, in judging the legal soundness of Judge Judd's initial ruling, the Rothmans are hardly less critical than Morgan would have been. They write that "the reasoning was weak, the arguments unpersuasive, but he [Judd] decided for the plaintiffs." The Rothmans shrink from drawing harsh conclusions, for they feel that "in Judd's decision, a love of man triumphed over keenness of intellect." One may well wonder about the long-term consequences of allowing judges to make decisions based on "love" rather than the law.

Similarly, *The Willowbrook Wars* provides ample cause for alarm among those critics who feel that reform through the judiciary will mire the courts in unending controversies over the day-to-day operations of these institutions. According to the Rothmans: "The case was incredibly time consuming. The parties were back before Judge Bartels [Judge Judd's replacement after Judd died] again and again, and neither he nor anyone else could find a way to limit a commitment once made.... Add to the roster [of the court's responsibilities] adequate medical care, diet, cleanliness, and temperature control, and even without including community placement, it is apparent that reforming an institution requires a submersion in details that can come dangerously close to drowning a judge, or anyone else."

And what about the concern that public interest lawyers usurp powers that ought to be held by the public's elected and appointed representatives? Here, too, almost in spite of themselves, the Rothmans provide evidence to confirm this concern. Their account makes clear that the parents of the Willowbrook children mainly wanted to see conditions improved. Ennis's ambitions were quite different: "Ennis wanted to use the doctrine [of a right to treatment] as a way of emptying mental hospitals; confident that the states would never be able to make the institutions therapeutic, [he] saw the right to treatment as a tool for prying patients loose from horrendous settings." The Rothmans frankly admit that Ennis's and the parents' agendas had little or nothing in common. The parents did formally allow Ennis to represent them, but, as the Rothmans tell it, they did so without entirely understanding what they were buying into. So what gave Ennis and the other lawyers the right to push their own program on the

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Willowbrook parents and residents? The justification, according to the Rothmans, is that Ennis had "a clean record [and] defined himself as acting in the public interest." Since anyone can define himself as operating in the public interest, this seems a pretty frail reed on which to rest Ennis's claims to legitimacy. Once again, the account presented by the authors belies their own judgment.

IF AN HONEST ACCOUNT of the problems of court-sponsored reform, even by two sympathetic authors such as the Rothmans, suggests that this approach has so many drawbacks, just what accounts for its continuing popularity? The Rothmans' enthusiasm seems to be based on the results: Nearly half of the Willowbrook residents were eventually placed in "community based" facilities and had their lives improved by being "normalized." But, from the book's own account, it is not at all clear just how much of an accomplishment this is. The authors themselves ask: "Could the claim that the residents would make better progress in community programs than in institutions be proved? Not really." Perhaps the authors would argue that, when all was said and done, this claim was indeed borne out by the successful placement of so many residents in "normalized" settings. But then one must still ask whether directly improving conditions at Willowbrook through the legislature—not an impossible task—might have been better than releasing patients into the community. The authors' rejection of this option seems to be based on an unshakable conviction that institutions like Willowbrook defy improvement. Perhaps, but the authors do not spend much time defending this view. One comes away from their book wondering whether large institutions like Willowbrook could be better run, and why no attempt was made to find out.

So does Morgan's theory, that court-sponsored reform serves only the "talking class," recommend itself after all? It would seem that Morgan is at least half right: If one defines a social service as a right rather than an act of benevolence, a transfer of power is indeed effected. If a service is a charity, the conditions under which it is granted are to be determined by those who grant it: the taxpayers and their elected or appointed representatives. But if it is a right, it is the recipients—and, of course, lawyers and judges—who run the show.

THIS LATTER STATE OF AFFAIRS does indeed appeal to the "talking class," not because it advances their own power (although it might), but because it strikes them as more politically legitimate to have recipients in power rather than taxpayers. The people who are empowered by a rights-oriented reform of schools, prisons, and mental institutions, are an ideologically interesting bunch: students, prisoners, the insane, even racial and sexual minorities. Those in charge under a benevolent regime are boring: middle-class taxpayers and their hired managers of the welfare state. The appeal of what I have called the rights approach over the charity of the welfare state corresponds strikingly to the greater political legitimacy of the "underclass"

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in the eyes of ACLU lawyers, radical psychologists, and political activists who now use the courts as instruments in their political struggles.

Intentionally or not, both these books tend to reinforce the possibility that the consequences of policy reform through the courts is *the* problem the current generation of reformers must now face. But unfortunately, neither is able to suggest new, effective directions that do not have the drawbacks of the rights approach. The fate of the various current campaigns to make the institutions of the welfare state work may well depend on our ability to make the issues less political, more prosaic.

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A Little Bit of Soul

FRED BAUMANN

***John P. Diggins:* The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism.** *Basic Books. 409 pp. $23.95.*

IN HIS LATEST BOOK, *The Lost Soul of American Politics,* John Diggins tries to explain why our political culture has been dominated by liberalism, why this has led many intellectuals to be alienated from politics, and above all, why American politics seems to have lost its moral vision since the death of Lincoln. Although this is a book on politics, his answers all have to do with religion, in particular with Calvinism. Diggins believes that liberal individualism "seemed to leave America without a sense of moral community," and that liberal pluralism—the licensed competition of self-interested groups—left her "without a sense of national purpose." But he is also aware of recent writers who wrongly try to deny America's liberal heritage altogether. Thus his project is simultaneously to reassert America's liberal traditions while showing that liberalism itself has had roots in a morally serious Calvinism that, fully developed in Lincoln, became "the conscience of liberalism."

Diggins's first task is to restore the Founders to the liberal tradition. This means engaging in a running critique of the scholars of the "classical republican" school, which traces the American regime to thinkers—from Cicero to Machiavelli to Montesquieu and Adam Smith—who are said to have emphasized citizen virtue, or at least fellow-feeling, rather than enlightened self-interest. (This school has great appeal to contemporary liberals and democratic socialists, who find in its emphasis on community and public-spiritedness support for a strong and caring state with sharply limited individual property rights.) This part of Diggins's project is generally successful. By citing

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John Adams's skepticism about the possibility of civic virtue, recounting how the *Federalist* harnessed self-interest into a pluralist competition of groups, emphasizing Tocqueville's pessimism about the appeal of any motive higher than enlightened self-interest in America, or unearthing James Fenimore Cooper's novel, *The Bravo*, and its devastating criticism of the pretense of civic virtue in the Italian city-state, Diggins leaves no doubt as to the overwhelming debt the founding generation owed to the early liberal thinkers and their emphasis on enlightened self-interest.

At the same time, Diggins makes his positive case that liberalism did not simply mean a cheerful unleashing of the appetites. He finds a sage, Calvinist pessimism in Adams's and Madison's low view of human nature. In liberal pluralism he discovers an understanding of the "darker 'propensities' that may have little relation to the conscious intentions of men." But where liberalism is most secular, most optimistically based on nature, he detects dangerous weakness. Thus in Diggins's view, Jefferson meant the natural equality of men, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, to be an equality empirically observable in nature. Hence that very commitment to equality was "forever frustrated," according to Diggins, by Jefferson's view, expressed in the *Notes on Virginia*, that blacks were actually inferior. It was only to be with Lincoln's fuller Calvinism that the teaching of the natural equality of all men by right was affirmed, precisely through the transcendence of mere nature by absolute, divine morality as the highest standard.

YET FOR DIGGINS, the liberalism of the Founders, even when stiffened by residual Calvinist pessimism, proved insufficient. In a broad survey of *ante bellum* America, he seeks to show how practical and intellectual confusion reigned on every major issue from sovereignty and slavery, to the party system and property. As Calhoun's arguments for nullification and secession demonstrated, the individualistic liberalism that saw in the social order only a contract, to be broken when burdensome, made political authority itself difficult to maintain. And as self-interested partisan spirit openly came to substitute for a concept of the public good, it became impossible to find a unifying standard to which to appeal. Everywhere he looks in the mid-nineteenth century, Diggins finds America caught helplessly in a relativism produced by the creed of selfishness.

Nor have things improved much since then, it appears, but for the episode of Lincoln and the Civil War. In a chapter on Tocqueville and Henry Adams, Diggins tries to show that Tocqueville's hope of substituting enlightened self-interest for civic virtue was not fulfilled. He is sympathetic to Henry Adams's condemnation of his age as an era gone mad with vulgar materialism, and hence to Adams's turn to religiosity. But Diggins suggests that Adams did not really need to turn to medieval Chartres and the cult of the Virgin; in the writings of Herman

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Melville, and above all in Abraham Lincoln, there were American examples of a fulfilled liberalism.

To explain his admiration for Lincoln, Diggins turns to Melville's *Billy Budd*. The late Hannah Arendt treated the novel as an allegory of civic virtue, celebrating the law-abiding captain who orders the saintly hero-killer hanged. In Diggins's view, it is really about the transcendence of politics and law by supreme standards of right and wrong. Rightly, I think, he points to the figure of Admiral Nelson, whom Melville holds up as a model of the commanding officer superior to Captain Vere. In Nelson, who proves himself worthy of his victory at Trafalgar by ignoring the textbook rules of the "military utilitarians," and in Billy Budd, the innocent killer who becomes the crucified Christ, he finds those sublime and ultimately religious standards that alone make political life coherent. Similarly, by transcending the low, "somber wisdom" of the Founders' pluralism, and simply insisting that a people does not have the right to do wrong, Lincoln offers a cure for the relativism, cynicism, and incoherence of American political life. In his doctrine of "free labor," Lincoln manages to prevent liberalism from falling into the worship of capital accumulation. Moreover, by fixing upon the absolute right of the worker to spend what he earns (a doctrine associated with Calvinist teachings of the "calling"), Lincoln provides grounds for the Declaration's assertion of men's natural equality. Lincoln's liberalism is no soulless doctrine of individual interest that undermines all moral principles; it offers a serious, even tragic, view of human obligation to divine standards.

This argument has a number of attractive sides. It suggests that liberal society can be defended without pretending that it is not really liberal, and without falling into a principled libertarianism that defends it on grounds of freedom but not of justice. Diggins is plainly on to something: From the outset there had to be more to America than mere self-interest. No one, including James Madison, expected an actual nation to survive on the universal authority of the hedonistic calculus. Moreover, we do need an explanation of how the right to liberty became transmuted into the exalted altruism of the Battle Hymn of the Republic (or the civil rights movement of our century). "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free," obviously made a lot of sense to a lot of Americans. Yet it is a striking paradox if the point of freedom is to avert death. Thus Diggins's attempt to show the relation between Calvinism and liberalism is an attempt to answer perhaps the most important question about the American regime: its moral standing.

STILL, by book's end, the relation between liberalism and Calvinism remains mysterious. The immediate problem is the definition of the terms Diggins uses throughout. For his understanding both of liberalism and Calvinism is distorted, paradoxically enough, by his im-

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plicit acceptance of many of the presuppositions of the "classical republican" school he is refuting. From these scholars, Diggins accepts the view that those philosophers who spoke of virtue were high-minded sorts who had little to say to pessimistically Calvinist, liberally self-interested Americans. But there is a fundamental difference between the project of those ancient thinkers who thought that the inculcation of moral excellence was the chief purpose of politics, and the project of those moderns who think that some kind of virtue is necessary to preserve a political mechanism whose real purpose is the satisfaction of desire. The latter, like Montesquieu and Adam Smith, are as liberal as Locke, John Adams, or Madison. But by "virtue" they usually meant something less exalted than did the ancients, which is why they could look with equanimity on the privatized, liberal state.

Interestingly, Diggins repeatedly refuses to recognize this point when it is made by his own witnesses, John Adams and Alexis de Tocqueville. Here is Adams, attacking Montesquieu's concept of virtue:

> What is virtue? It is not that classical virtue which we see personified in the choice of Hercules .... It is not Christian virtue, so much more sublime .... What is it then? According to Montesquieu, it should seem to be merely a negative quality; the absence only of ambition and avarice....

Adams emphasizes that Montesquieu's virtue is defective precisely because it is neither classical nor Christian. But Diggins will not believe him. Strikingly, on precisely the same point, Diggins cites Tocqueville:

> We must not take Montesquieu's idea in a narrow sense. What this great man meant is that the republic continues to exist only through the influence of society upon itself. What he understands by virtue is the moral power which each individual exercises over himself and which prevents him from violating the rights of others.

Tocqueville is merely claiming Montesquieu as his predecessor in trying to make enlightened self-interest—self-interest that accepts the rights of others—substitute for more ambitious (ancient or Christian) teachings of virtue. But again, Diggins will not believe his own witness on Montesquieu's modern understanding of "virtue." He guesses that "perhaps for reasons of affection or loyalty of a French compatriot, Tocqueville tends to minimize the difference between his sociological approach and Montesquieu's political approach to man and government."

WHY DOES IT MATTER whether Diggins understands Montesquieu if his subject is the Calvinist soul of America? It matters because it cuts him off from much of the richness of the liberal tradition, and leads him to compensate by finding Calvinist roots where they do not exist, and crucial problems in liberalism which are not that hard to solve. For example, a low view of human nature is something that is characteristic of most early modern political thought; it is something that Machievelli shares with Augustine, for instance. The difference is

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that liberalism is hopeful about the prospect of dealing with this low human material. To speak of the Calvinist roots of liberalism on the basis of liberalism's skepticism about perfection proves nothing at all. Diggins tries to heighten the contrast between Thomas Jefferson, who could not justify the very principle of human equality he had enunciated in the Declaration , and Lincoln, who could. But from Locke on, liberalism was always perfectly capable of distinguishing between equality of rights to life, liberty, and property, as the recognition of basic desires all humans have and cannot deny, and any other form of natural inequality, such as size, speed, or skill. Lincoln knew this, and thought Jefferson did, too. But once more, Diggins will not believe his own witness. Thus, Lincoln:

> I think the authors of that notable instrument [the Declaration] intended to include *all* men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in *all* respects.... This they said, and this they meant.

Diggins's skeptical comment is "perhaps," for, "had Lincoln probed beyond the text he may have discovered the dark side of Jefferson's unconscious motives."

Had he chosen to believe Lincoln, Diggins might have come to grips with the real problem. For then it would be clear that Lincoln's religious certainty, his tragic sense, and his Biblical imagery, were meant to affirm man's absolute right to freedom on this earth; not his absolute duty to obey God. That he made the link between these two very disparate traditions surely seems to be the case; that large parts of the nation thought, and have continued to think it a proper one is equally true. But how is it done? Just how do the rights of free men become the duties of sinful men?

Here Diggins turns to Lincoln's doctrine of free labor, the special claim of free workers over slaves and over capital. This helps Diggins explain how liberalism condemns itself when it fosters capitalism and replaces work by wealth as the measure of honor. Again, there is probably something to this, but it is not clear how much. For surely the right to dispose of what one has earned extends to the right to invest it in IBM? (It is noteworthy that the recent lay letter on Catholic social thought triumphantly responds to the hierarchy's criticisms of capitalism by citing Lincoln's doctrine of free labor.) A Christianity, Calvinist or Catholic, that seriously wanted to restrain capitalism and materialism would have gone beyond the claims of free labor to divinely imposed and otherworldly duties. As such, it would pose a real challenge to liberalism (as indeed it always has).

IF THE RELATIONSHIP of Calvinism to liberalism is left essentially puzzling in Diggins's book, the deeper problem may lie in the discipline of intellectual history itself. If we ask Diggins precisely what a serious thinker and statesman like Lincoln thought about Christianity and its relation to liberty, we ask in vain. Instead, abstractions like

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"Calvinism" are so broadly defined that they apply both to anyone who (like Madison) was not a naive optimist, and to the fully developed sense of tragedy of a Melville or Lincoln. Intellectual history of the grand sort attempted here is possible, but only on the basis of a painstaking and careful composition of a mosaic of reconstructions of the thought of individual thinkers.

When large-scale cultural history is attempted without sufficient groundwork, the historical abstractions it employs begin to assume categorical reality and keep the historian from a direct encounter with the material. This is what "classical republicanism" does to Diggins. Such books then end up reading like poetry, as they develop attractive associations among the figures they summon up—Henry Adams's Virgin Mary, Melville's Lord Nelson, Diggins's Lincoln—and wend their way to a final moral. And perhaps books that aspire to reestablish national myths ought to be considered poetry. On that basis, Diggins's account is both more edifying and more genuinely enlightening than Garry Wills's, for example, in that Diggins turns to the right problems and asks the right questions. But there are other books—Eldon Eisenach on liberalism and Calvinism, Thomas Pangle on Montesquieu, Harry Jaffa on Lincoln—that put us in much closer, if less graceful, touch with the subject matter itself.

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